

SONG SOLOMON

INTRODUCTION

The first verse of this little book identifies Solomon as its writer: "The song of songs, which is Solomon's." Solomon also wrote the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

This book is actually not a story at all; it is a song. We read in [1Kings 4:32](#): "And he [Solomon] spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five." Solomon wrote three thousand proverbs, but it is quite interesting that if you count the proverbs in the Book of Proverbs and even include the Book of Ecclesiastes, you come up with quite a few less than three thousand. So we have very few of all that Solomon wrote. However, we can say two things about those that we do have: first, we have the best that he wrote -- surely we would have that; second, we have those that the Spirit of God wanted us to have.

This verse also tells us that "his songs were a thousand and five." Think of that -- more than a thousand songs! That makes him quite a songwriter. He would have fit in on Tin Pan Alley any day. It is interesting to note that the Word of God is very specific when it says that he wrote one thousand and five songs. It doesn't simply give us a round number. Probably those which have been preserved for us are those five. Most of Solomon's songs, of course, we do not have. In fact, we generally say that we have only one song. But the Song of Solomon is also called the Book of Canticles. A canticle is a little song, and that means that in this book we have several canticles, several little songs. There is a difference of opinion as to how many songs there are. The old position is that there are five, and I agree with that. I notice that The New Scofield Reference Bible states that there are thirteen. That is an excellent Bible, but I will continue to accept the old division of the book into five songs.

"Beloved" is the name for Him; "love" is the name for her.

"I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies" ([Song 6:3](#)).

"Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned" ([Song 8:7](#)).

The Song of Solomon is a parabolic poem. The interpretation, not the inspiration, causes the difficulty. There are some who actually feel it should not be in the Bible; however, it is in the canon of Scripture. The Song of Solomon is the great neglected book of the Bible. The reader who is going through the Word of God for the first time is puzzled when he comes to it. The carnal Christian will misunderstand and misinterpret it. Actually this little book has been greatly abused by people who have not understood it. When Peter was puzzled by some of Paul's epistles, he wrote, "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" ([2Pet. 3:16](#)). I think this is also true of the Song of Solomon.

Origen and Jerome tell us that the Jews would not permit their young men to read this book until they were thirty years old. The reason was that they felt there was the danger

of reading into it the salacious and the suggestive, the vulgar and the voluptuous, the sensuous and the sexual. On the contrary, this is a wonderful picture of physical, human, wedded love. It gives the answer to two erroneous groups of people: those who hold to asceticism and think it is wrong to get married, and those who hold to hedonism and think that the satisfying of their lusts is of primary importance. This book makes it very clear that both are wrong. It upholds wedded love as a very wonderful thing, a glorious experience.

Sometimes young preachers are counseled not to use the Song of Solomon until they become old men. A retired minister advised me not to preach on it until I was sixty years old. Do you know what I did? I turned right around and preached on it immediately -- that's what a young preacher would do. Now that I am past sixty years, I think I am qualified, at least as far as the chronology is concerned, to be able to speak on it. This book means more to me today than it did forty years ago. The elaborate, vivid, striking, and bold language in this book is a wonderful, glorious picture of our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. I know of no book that will draw you closer to Him or be more personal than the Song of Solomon.

If you were to compare the Song of Solomon with other Oriental poetry of its period -- such as some of the Persian poetry -- you would find the Song of Solomon to be mild and restrained. Reading the Persian poetry, on the other hand, would be like reading some of the modern, dirty stuff that is being written today.

By contrast, the Jews called the Song of Solomon the Holy of Holies of Scripture. Therefore, not everyone was permitted inside its sacred enclosure. Here is where you are dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. That is one reason I hesitate to discuss this book. It will be abused by unbelievers and carnal Christians. But if you are one who is walking with the Lord, if the Lord Jesus means a great deal to you and you love Him, then this little book will mean a great deal to you also.

The Song of Solomon is poetic and practical. Here God is speaking to His people in poetic songs which unfold a story. We need to take our spiritual shoes from off our feet as we approach this book. We are on holy ground. The Song of Solomon is like a fragile flower that requires delicate handling.

There have been four different and important meanings found in this book:

1. The Song of Solomon sets forth the glory of wedded love. Here is declared the sacredness of the marital relationship and that marriage is a God-given institution. This little book shows us what real love is. The Jews taught that it reveals the heart of a satisfied husband and that of a devoted wife.

Today we see a great movement toward "sexual freedom," which many people seem to think is good. One young man who had lived and believed in "free love" told me that he had come to realize that such a life is the life of an animal. He said, "For several years I lived like an animal. If you want to know the truth, I don't think sex means any more to my group of friends than it means to an animal." The younger generation today is geared to sex; their life-style is one of sexual expression. But I am of the opinion that they actually know very little about it. All they know about sex is what an animal knows. A

dog out on the street knows as much as they do. Something is missing -- there is a terrible void in their lives.

This generation may have a great deal of experience with sex but knows little about love. They know the Hollywood version of love; yet they think they know it all. The story is told of the father who wanted to talk to his young boy about sex. He beat around the bush and finally blurted out, "Son, I'd like to talk to you about some of the facts of life." The boy said, "Sure, Dad, what would you like to know?" The boy knew the raw facts about sex, so he thought he knew more than his dad knew. There was a veteran movie queen who had had five husbands. She knew about sex, but she didn't know anything about real love; so she committed suicide. Reading our modern novels and plays is like taking a trip through the sewers of Paris! There is a stark contrast between the ideas of our generation and the glory of wedded love as it is portrayed in the Song of Solomon.

2. This little book sets forth the love of Jehovah for Israel. That is not a new thought which is found in this book alone. The prophets spoke of Israel as the wife of Jehovah. Hosea dwells on that theme. Idolatry in Israel is likened to a breach in wedded love and is the greatest sin in all the world according to Hosea.

The scribes and the rabbis of Israel have always given these two interpretations to this book, and they have been accepted by the church. However, there are two other interpretations set forth by the church.

3. The Song of Solomon is a picture of Christ and the church. The church is the bride of Christ. This is a familiar figure in the New Testament (see [Eph. 5](#); [Rev. 21](#)). However, in this book God uses a picture of human affection to convey to our dull minds, our dead hearts, our distorted affections, and our diseased wills His so great love. He uses the very best of human love to arouse us to realize the wonderful love that He has for us. This book can lead you into a marvelous, wonderful relationship with the Lord Jesus which you probably have never known before. My friend, what we need today is a knowledge of the Word of God and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I am afraid that very few of us are experiencing this today.

4. This book depicts the communion of Christ and the individual believer. It portrays the love of Christ for the individual and the soul's communion with Christ. Many great saints of God down through the years have experienced this. Paul could say, ". . . the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" ([Gal. 2:20](#)). Samuel Rutherford could spend a whole night in prayer. His wife would miss him during the night and would get up and go looking for him. Even on cold nights she would find him on his knees praying, and she would take his big overcoat and throw it around him. Men like Dwight L. Moody and Robert McChesney came into a real, personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not some kind of second experience, as some people try to describe it. It is more than an experience. It is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ -- seeing how wonderful He is, how glorious He is. We need to come to the place where it can truly be said of us that we love Him because He first loved us. To open up this little book will be like the breaking of Mary's alabaster box of ointment, and I trust that the fragrance of it will fill our lives and spread out to others.

People are being deluded today. They feel that living the Christian life is like following the instructions for putting together a toy. The instructions for a little truck or house will say to take piece "A" and put it down by piece "D" and then take piece "C" and fit it between them. I want to tell you, some of those instructions are really complicated! I know because I buy them for my little grandsons. It almost takes a college degree to be able to put some of those gadgets together. Some people think that the Christian life is like that. They have the impression that if you can get together a little mixture of psychology, a smattering of common sense, a good dash of salesmanship, and a few verses from the Bible as a sugarcoating over the whole thing, that makes a successful formula for living the Christian life.

My friend, may I say that what we need is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We need a hot passion for Him. The Lord is not pleased with this cool, lukewarm condition which exists today in the churches among so-called dedicated Christians. Too many who are called dedicated Christians are actually as cold as a cucumber. Some are even unfriendly and arrogant in their attitudes. What we all need is a real, living, burning passion for the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This little book is going to be personal. It is not for the ear of the unsaved man. But for the man who has a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Since the Song of Solomon is a series of scenes in a drama which is not told in chronological sequence, I will make no attempt to outline the book. What we find in this little book is the use of antiphony; that is, one character speaks and another responds. We have many characters: the young bride (she is a Shulamite), the daughters of Jerusalem, the bridegroom, and the Shulamite's family. In the family there is the father (who is dead), the mother, two daughters, and two or more sons.

One interpretation of the story given in the Song of Solomon came out of the German rationalistic schools of the nineteenth century. (It was from these schools that liberalism first crept into the church. Actually, liberalism was and is simply unbelief.) These people tried to interpret the story so that the Shulamite girl was kidnapped by Solomon; at first she did not want to go with him, and then finally she did.

To a child of God who sees in this book the wonderful relationship between Christ and the church, such an interpretation is repugnant. men like Rutherford, McChesney, and Moody -- this was their favorite book -- could not accept this kidnapping interpretation. Neither could the late Dr. Harry Ironside. So he got down on his knees and asked God for an interpretation. Much of what I am going to pass on to you is based on Dr. Ironside's interpretation.

The setting of the drama is the palace in Jerusalem, and some of the scenes are flashbacks to a previous time. There is a reminder here of the Greek drama in which a chorus talks back and forth to the protagonists of the play. The daughters of Jerusalem carry along the tempo of the story. These dialogues are evidently to be sung. Several lovely scenes are introduced at Jerusalem which find a counterpart in the church.

The Shulamite girl says, "Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of

the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept" ([Song 1:6](#)). The elder daughter of this poor Shulamite family is a sort of a Cinderella, and she has been forced to keep the vineyard. She is darkened with sunburn from working out in the vineyard. Apparently this family lived in the hill country of Ephraim, and they were tenant farmers. We would call them croppers or hillbillies. We get this picture from a verse in the last chapter: "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver" ([Song 8:11](#)).

I think that is the setting where the first scene takes place. The girl is sunburned and she feels disgraced. In that day a sunburn meant you were a hardworking girl. The women in the court wanted to keep their skin as fair as they possibly could. It was exactly the opposite of our situation here in California. Here the young girls go down to the beach and lie out in the sun all day in order to get a suntan. Today, it's not a disgrace to have a suntan; in fact, it is a disgrace if you don't have one!

Not only was this girl sunburned from working out in the vineyard, but she says that she was unable to keep her own vineyard. That means she hadn't been to the beauty parlor. Apparently she was a naturally beautiful girl, but she hadn't been able to enhance her beauty or groom herself.

She was an outdoor girl, a hardworking girl. Apparently her brothers also made her watch the sheep. "If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents" ([Song 1:8](#)). So she worked in the vineyards and also had to herd the sheep.

The place where she worked was along a caravan route there in the hill country. Perhaps some of you have traveled in that land, and you know how rugged it is. A tour bus goes up through there today, and the tourists take a trip into that part of the country. I have been through that rugged territory twice, and I have pictures of some Arab girls working in the fields. I think that is exactly the way it was with the Shulamite girl.

When she would look up from her work, she would see the caravans that passed by going between Jerusalem and Damascus. We see her reaction: "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?" ([Song 3:6](#)). She would see the caravans of merchants and also the caravans that carried beautiful ladies of the court. They were the ones who didn't have a sunburn. They had a canopy over them as they traveled on camels or on elephants. The girl would see the beautiful jewels and the satins. She never had anything like that, and she would dream about it, you know.

She also would smell the frankincense and the myrrh as the caravans passed by. We shall see how this is a wonderful picture of the Lord Jesus both in His birth and in His death. They brought Him myrrh as a gift when He was born; when He was dead, they brought myrrh to put on His body. There are wonderful spiritual pictures here, truths that will draw us to the person of Christ.

One day while the girl was tending her sheep, a handsome shepherd appeared. He fell in love with her. I must run ahead enough to tell you it is a picture of Christ and the church. This is what he said to her, "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the

daughters" ([Song 2:2](#)). Again, he says, "Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead" ([Song 4:1](#)). This is beautiful poetic language. It is a picture of the love of Christ for the church. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.

Finally she gave her heart to the shepherd: "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste" ([Song 2:3](#)).

Remember that the word love is used when it is speaking of the bride, and beloved is the word that refers to the bridegroom.

The Lord Jesus has given us an invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will [rest you]" ([Matt. 11:28](#)). Do you know what it is to rest in Jesus Christ? Is He a reality to you? Do you rest in Him? How wonderful this relationship can become to you! I am not talking about religion or about an organization. I am talking about a personal relationship, a love relationship with Jesus Christ.

After she gave her heart to him, they were madly in love. There is nothing quite like marital love such as they experienced. "My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies" ([Song 2:16](#)). How wonderful! They had that wonderful, personal relationship.

Apparently he took her to dinner one time as he traveled through the country. (All she knew of him was that he was a shepherd, but evidently a very prominent one.) "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love" ([Song 2:4](#)).

He was a most peculiar shepherd. He didn't have any sheep that she could see. She asked him about his sheep: "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon . . . ?" ([Song 1:7](#)). Where are his sheep? He is an unusual shepherd.

Then one day he announced that he was going away but that he would return. This is an obvious parallel to the words of the Lord Jesus: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" ([John 14:1-3](#)).

The days passed and she waited. Finally, her family and friends began to ridicule her. They said, "You are just a simple, country girl taken in by him." This is exactly what Peter said would happen in our time: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" ([2Pet. 3:3-4](#)).

Yet she trusted him. She loved him. She dreamed of him: "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not" ([Song 3:1](#)). Now let me ask you a very personal question. Do you really miss Christ? Do you long for Him?

One night she lay restlessly upon her couch when she noticed a fragrance in the room. In that day it was a custom that a lover would put some myrrh or frankincense in the opening to the door handle. She smelled the perfume and went to the door. "I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock" ([Song 5:5](#)). She knew that he had been there. She knew that he really hadn't forgotten.

Are there evidences of the fragrance and the perfume of Christ in your life today? Oh, my friend, don't ever be satisfied with religious gimmicks. Why not get right down to where the rubber meets the road? What does Christ mean to you right now? Is the fragrance of Christ in your life today?

Now she knew that her lover was near. The Lord Jesus said, ". . . Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" ([Matt. 28:20](#)). Paul could say while he was in prison that the Lord stood by him. The Lord Jesus has promised, ". . . I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" ([Heb. 13:5](#)).

One day she is in the vineyard working with the vines. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes" ([Song 2:15](#)). She is lifting up the vines so that the little foxes cannot get to the grapes. In that land, they raise the grapes right down on the ground. They do not string them up as we do in this country. So she is lifting up the vines and putting a rock under them so that the little foxes will not get to the grapes.

While she is doing this, down the road there comes a pillar of smoke. "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?" ([Song 3:6](#)). The cry is passed along, "Behold, King Solomon is coming!" But she is busy, and she doesn't know King Solomon. Then someone comes to her excitedly and says to her, "Oh, King Solomon is asking for you!" And she says, "Asking for me? I don't know King Solomon. I've never met him, why would he ask for me?"

"The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away" ([Song 2:8-10](#)). And so she is brought into the presence of King Solomon. Do you know who King Solomon is? Why, he is her shepherd, and he has come for her.

This is the promise of the Lord Jesus: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" ([John 10:27-28](#)). Paul writes, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" ([1Thess. 4:16-17](#)). The Lord Jesus has promised that He is coming again for us. "For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the

tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away" ([Song 2:11-13](#)). One of these days He is going to call us out of this world.

By the way, how much are you involved in the world? I have a feeling there are some people who are so satisfied down here, who are doing so well in this affluent society, that if He should come for them, they would go crying all the way to heaven because they have so much here in this life. He says to her, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock." That is where the Lord puts us -- in the cleft of the rock until the storm passes. "In the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely" ([Song 2:13-14](#)). What a glorious thing!

"He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love" ([Song 2:4](#)). Salvation is a love affair -- we love Him because He first loved us. That is the story that this little book is telling.

Chapter 1

It is important for you to read the beautiful story of this book before you come to the text. I have given this in some detail in the introduction.

There are five canticles or brief songs in the book. They depict the experience and the story of a country girl, a Shulamite, up in the hill country. A shepherd came one day, and she fell in love with him, and he fell in love with her. He left her but promised to return. He didn't return as soon as she had expected. One day it was announced that King Solomon had arrived and wanted to see her. She couldn't believe it. When she was brought into his presence, she recognized that he was her shepherd-lover.

Some interpreters feel that this is a connected story told in sequence. I personally do not hold that view. I think the scene shifts, and there are flashbacks to earlier times. However, the primary concern for us in our study is the application of this book to you and me as believers. It is a picture of the beautiful love relationship between the believer and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The song of songs, which is Solomon's [[Song 1:1](#)].

I suppose one could liken this book to a piece of folk music, or more likely to an opera. These canticles are put together to give us a glorious, wonderful story. This is one of the methods God used in speaking to His people. It rebukes asceticism, but it also condemns lust and unfaithfulness to the marriage vow. This is no soap opera. It is not a cheap play in which the hero is a neurotic, the heroine is erotic, and the plot is tommyrotic. Rather, it is a beautiful song of marital love.

His Kiss (1:2)

In this first song, we find the bride and the bridegroom together in a wonderful relationship.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine [[Song 1:2](#)].

The kiss in that day was the pledge of peace, a token of peace. Solomon's very name means peace. He was a prince of peace and he ruled in Jerusalem, the city of peace. The Shulamite girl is the daughter of peace.

The kiss indicates the existence of a very personal, close relationship, such as the Lord Jesus has with His own. He is able to communicate His message personally to you and me through the Word of God. That is why there needs to be a return to a study of the Word of God -- more than just learning the mechanics of the Bible, or even memorizing the Word, but a personal relationship with Him so that He can speak through His Word to our hearts. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." He has spoken peace to us, you see. He alone can speak peace to the human heart.

In the Old Testament we have seen types of Christ. A. Moody Stuart has written: "Moses and the prophets have come, Aaron and the priests have come, and last of all, David and the kings have come; but let Him now come himself, the true prophet, priest, and king, of all his people." And Bernard, one who had drawn very close to Christ, commented: "I hear not Moses for he is slow of speech, the lips of Isaiah are unclean, Jeremiah cannot speak because he is a child, and all the prophets are dumb; Himself, himself of whom they speak, let him speak" (The Song of Songs: An Exposition of the Song of Solomon, p. 95).

The one who has ears to hear and has heard Him speak peace -- peace through the blood of His cross by forgiveness of sin -- can take the next step. If you have been reconciled to God by redemption in Christ, He entreats the kiss of the solemn, nuptial contract. It is the kiss which seals the marriage vow between Christ and the believer.

We find this same custom in our marriage ceremonies today. When I perform a marriage ceremony and both couples have said "I will" and "I do," I say, "Lift the bride's veil and give the marriage kiss." The kiss is a solemn thing; it seals the marriage covenant.

In redemption, the Lord Jesus not only gives us deliverance, but He also gives us freedom. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" ([John 8:36](#)). What kind of freedom is that? It is the freedom now to come to Him and to say, "I present my body as a living sacrifice to You" (see [Rom. 12:1](#)). It is the freedom of dedication, which brings us into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Are you such a child of God? Are you a trembling soul who is afraid to lay hold of His grace? He wants you to appropriate it for yourself. In Ephesians we are told that He is rich in mercy and He is rich in grace, and He wants to share with us the riches of His glory.

I don't know how you feel about this, but I know that I need His mercy, and I need His grace. His invitation is, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" ([Matt. 11:28](#)). This is a real rest. It is not rest for just one day on the Sabbath. This is a rest for the seven days of the week. It is resting in His finished redemption. Then He says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" ([Matt. 11:29-30](#)). Being yoked up with Him is a wonderful, glorious relationship. And He is the One who carries the load for you.

Erskine expressed it poetically:

His mouth the joy of heaven reveals;
His kisses from above,
Are pardons, promises, and seals
Of everlasting love.

His Love (1:3)

"For thy love is better than wine." In that day wine typified the highest of the luxuries this earth offered. It was the champagne dinner, which included everything from soup to nuts. It speaks of that which brings the highest joy to the heart. Paul wrote, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" ([Eph. 5:18](#)). Oh, to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that we might experience that excitement, that exhilaration, that ecstasy of belonging to Christ and of having fellowship with Him!

Friend, I am talking about something that neither you nor I know very much about, do we? We play at church. We talk about being dedicated Christians simply because we are as busy as termites, and often have the same effect. We need to come to that attitude of which Peter wrote: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" ([1Pet. 1:8](#)).

Habakkuk stated it like this: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" ([Hab. 3:17-18](#)). Have you arrived at that place? No wonder it says, "Thy love is better than wine."

I do not mean to be irreverent, but do you get a kick out of life? Well, this is the way to get it. Wine is excess and may lead you to alcoholism. Wine will give a temporary lift, I grant you, but it will let you down. My friend, allow the Spirit of God to come into your life. He will shed abroad in your heart the love of God. That is one reason we need the Holy Spirit.

Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as
ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee [[Song](#)
[1:3](#)].

The "ointment" is the perfume. When He began His life on earth, myrrh was brought to be put on His body. There was a fragrance in His entire life on earth from His birth to His death. Oh, the fragrance of His love for us when He died upon the cross!

His Drawing Power (1:4)

Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his
chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember
thy love more than wine: the upright love thee [[Song 1:4](#)].

This is a wonderful passage of Scripture. It is the expression of one who is in love with Him, who desires a close fellowship with Him. But then comes the awareness that we can't reach that state; we cannot attain to it because it is too high for us. That is the position from which we say, "Draw me."

Bonar expressed his love in these lines:

I love the name of Jesus,
Immanuel, Christ the Lord,
Like fragrance on the breezes,
His name abroad is poured.

What does the name of Jesus mean to you? If you know that you have never experienced that wonderful relationship, then listen to the bride, and give her response, "Draw me." If you are a child of God, then say, "Draw me." Let Him lift you up and bring you to this place which you cannot reach yourself. Recognize that in yourself you cannot rise to that level. Francis Quarles has expressed this thought beautifully:

But like a block beneath whose burden lies
That undiscovered worm that never dies,
I have no will to rouse, I have no power to rise.
For can the water-buried axe implore
A hand to raise it, or itself restore,
And from her sandy deeps approach the dry-foot shore?
So hard's the task for sinful flesh and blood,
To lend the smallest help to what is good;
My God, I cannot move the least degree.
Ah! if but only those who active be,
None should thy glory see, thy glory none should see.
Lord, as I am, I have no power at all
To hear thy voice, or echo to thy call.
Give me the power to will, the will to do;
O raise me up, and I will strive to go:
Draw me, O draw me with thy treble-twist;
That have no power, but merely to resist;
O lend me strength to do, and then command thy list.

God tells us that His power is available to us. He says that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. He will answer the heart cry, "Draw me," Lord. There is an excitement and an ecstasy of being brought into the presence of Christ by the Spirit of God. He can make Christ real to us.

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him . . ." ([John 6:44](#)). The Lord Jesus said to His own, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you . . ." ([John 15:16](#)) -- "I am the One who went after you." We did not seek after God; God sought after us. He is still seeking us today. We can only rouse ourselves to say, Lord, "draw me." We need the Spirit of God to give to us the Water of Life. If we will drink of that Water of Life, we will have rivers of living water gushing up within us and flowing out from us.

"We will run after thee." The idea here is not that we ask to be drawn because we are lazy and indifferent, but we are helpless. We have the desire -- the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. We want to run after Him, but He will have to give us the legs to do it. He must give us that enablement, that divine enablement. He must draw us. "Wherefore . . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith . . ." ([Heb. 12:1-2](#)). "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew

their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" ([Isa. 40:31](#)).

His Chambers (1:4)

So when we cry, "Draw me, we will run after thee," He responds -- "The king hath brought me into his chambers." The chamber is the secret of His presence, His pavilion, like the Holy of Holies within the sanctuary. It is the secret place away from the crowd. It is the place in the cleft of the rock which He has made for us, where He can cover us with His hand and commune with us. It is like Christ's invitation: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" ([Rev. 3:20](#)). Oh, what a privilege to fellowship with Him!

Yet we withdraw and cry out with Isaiah, ". . . Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" ([Isa. 6:5](#)). But "the king hath brought me into his chambers" -- He is the One who has provided a redemption. He is the One who took the coals from the altar and touched our lips. He is the One who made the supreme sacrifice.

"We will be glad and rejoice in thee." We need more joy in our churches, and we need more joy in our lives. Jesus said, ". . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" ([John 10:10](#), italics mine). And John wrote, ". . . These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" ([1John 1:4](#), italics mine). The Lord means for us to live life to the hilt.

Oh, let's quit playing church, and let's quit saying, "I belong to a certain group, and I have had an experience." The point is, is Christ close to you today? "The king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee."

At this moment there are probably millions of people across the country who are crawling up onto a bar stool. Well, if I were in their situation, I'd crawl up there too. They need something to face life. Many a man feels he needs that drink in order to face his business. Many a person needs that drink in order to face a lonely evening. Life is too much for them. It is too complicated. May I say to you, if you are a child of God, you can always know that God loves you. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. He wants to make His love real to us. He wants to manifest His love to us. That is a lot better than crawling up onto a bar stool. ". . . Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" ([Eph. 5:18](#)).

If we would read on in [Ephesians 5](#), we would find the next verse going on to say, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" ([Eph. 5:19](#)). I have always been glad that Paul didn't write, "Singing to yourselves," because I can't sing. But I can speak it. I can say it. It wouldn't hurt for you to say it either. In fact, it would be good to hear a "Praise the Lord" from all of us believers. Oh, we need to praise the Lord in this day. "We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine."

"The upright love thee." Who are the upright? They are those who belong to Him. They are those who have said to Him, "Draw me." He has placed them on their feet, and they are to run the race of life, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith.

The Christian life is a love affair. We love Him because He first loved us. He loved us enough to give Himself for us. Now He says to us, "I want your love." That seals it. If you don't love Him, then don't go on pretending. Be honest and chuck the whole thing. It is all meaningless if you do not love Him.

Now listen to the believer's loving response, as we find it in [Psalm 63](#); "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is" ([Ps. 63:1](#)). My friend, are you thirsty for God? The Lord Jesus said, ". . . If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" ([John 7:37](#)).

"To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary" ([Ps. 63:2](#)) -- this is the bride's secret place of communion.

"Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips" ([Ps. 63:3-5](#)). Oh, friend, let's get our lips busy praising Him!

"Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice" ([Ps. 63:7](#)). You remember that the Lord Jesus said that He wanted to gather the people of Jerusalem under His wings like a hen gathers her chicks (see [Matt. 23:37](#)). This gives to us a picture of His love and the great desire to protect the helpless ones from harm.

"My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me. But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes. But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped" ([Ps. 63:8-11](#)). What a glorious picture of a believer's devotion to Christ!

The Sunburned Slave Girl (1:5-6)

I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept [[Song 1:5-6](#)].

"The tents of Kedar" were made of the skin of the black sheep and the black goats. In that land even today one can see many of these nomad people who have black tents.

When the bride says here that she is black, she is not referring to her race. She was a Jewish girl from the area of Shunem. She explains the blackness herself. Her family were tenant farmers on one of the vineyards owned by Solomon, and they made her work out in the vineyard. She is sunburned -- "I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me."

She is black, but she is beautiful. Black is beautiful, we hear today. It certainly can be. Black is beautiful when the heart is right with the Lord. The pigment of the skin is of no importance whatever. The condition of the heart is the important matter.

It is interesting that most of the rays of the sun do not bother our skin. It is the ultraviolet segment of the sun's rays that burns our skin. Those rays can come through clouds, so that we can get sunburned on cloudy days even when we are unaware of it. Since I have had cancer, my doctor warns me about sunlight. He tells me to keep my head covered, even on the cloudy days. He warns me against going out into the sunlight. The ultraviolet rays can burn, and they can cause cancer.

A great many people think they can come into the light to the holy presence of God without a covering. I tell you, no one can come into the holy presence of God without the covering of the righteousness of Christ. That is our protection -- which is another meaning of being covered with His wings. You and I need to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ to come into the presence of God.

Let's get back to our girl who is blackened with sunburn. She has been working outside because her mother's children were angry with her, and they made her keep the vineyards. Then she says, "But mine own vineyard have I not kept." This is the bride's portrait of herself. She has some natural beauty, but she has nothing to commend her because she hasn't been able to take care of herself. She has had no time to go to the beauty parlor. She hasn't been able to have her hair styled. She hasn't been able to get a facial. She hasn't been able to get whatever it would take to enhance her beauty. That has been neglected because she has been made to work so hard.

Mankind is not beautiful in the presence of God. Sometimes we tend to think that the reason God is interested in us is because we are such nice, sweet little children. Actually we are ugly; we are sunburned. We are not attractive to Him as we are, but He says that He is going to make us His beautiful bride. That is the wonderful picture given to us in [Ephesians 5](#). The example given to husbands is the love of Christ for the church. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" ([Eph. 5:25-27](#)). You see, Christ is taking us to the beauty parlor. He will fashion us into His bride, without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish!

The Pasture (1:7-8)

Now the story moves on. The Shulamite speaks to the shepherd whom she has just met.

Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where
thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one
that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? [[Song 1:7](#)].

He seemed to be an unusual shepherd in that he didn't have any sheep that she could see. So she raised a question concerning his sheep. The shepherd seemed to be evasive. Now let's look beneath the surface and see something very precious.

The Lord Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. . . . And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" ([John 10:14, 16](#)). We all tend to raise questions, as the Shulamite girl asked the shepherd, about "the other sheep," the heathen. Are they lost? We want to know about the doctrine of election. We want to know about this one or that one -- is he saved, or isn't he saved? We tend to pass judgment on those who are around us. Instead of questioning another's position in Christ, we need to make sure that we are His sheep. That is our direct concern.

The shepherd answers her.

If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth
by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the
shepherds' tents [[Song 1:8](#)].

And this would be the answer of the Lord Jesus to us.

"Feed thy kids" -- the little lambs need to be fed, and all of us, my friend, come under that classification. Peter put it this way, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" ([1Pet. 2:2](#)).

"Feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents." Believers need to feed themselves beside the shepherds' tents, because that is the place where the grass would be unusually green. Of course it is the Word of God on which we are to feed. We cannot feed others and tell them about the joy of the Word of God unless it is a joy to us. Herbert puts it this way:

My soul's a shepherd too, a flock it feeds
Of thoughts and words and deeds;
The pasture is thy word, the streams thy grace,
Enriching all the place.

We need to feed upon the Word of God, then we need to get the Word out to others, you see. The Bride of Christ, who is to be presented to Him in the future, is to get the Word of God out today. As the body of believers, we are failing to do this.

"If thou know not, O thou fairest among women" -- there are many things for which we do not have the answer. When I was a young preacher, I tried to get the answer to everything. I was given some good advice: "Don't let what you don't know disturb what you do know!" Do you know that Christ died for your sins? Do you know that you are trusting in Him? Are you resting upon Him? You can say, ". . . I know that my redeemer liveth . . ." ([Job 19:25](#)). You can say, ". . . I know whom I have believed . . ." ([2Tim. 1:12](#)) -- Paul could say that, but I don't find Paul saying that he knew all about the doctrine of election. So let's not permit what we don't know to disturb what we do know. That is what the shepherd is saying to this girl. Don't worry about what you don't know. Just be sure to feed your sheep. That is your responsibility.

There is a bedridden lady in Ohio who hears our radio broadcasts. She contacts about one thousand people each month, and she asks them to listen to the Bible being taught by radio. She is a real missionary! Now I am sure that she is puzzled by many things and has questions to ask about things she doesn't know, but so far I have never received a letter from her with a question in it. She isn't spending her time asking questions. She is

spending her time getting out the Word of God. That is exactly what the shepherd tells the girl. He says, "You don't need to know about all these other sheep. You just feed your sheep." Be sure you get the Word of God to them.

The Bride's Adorning (1:9-11)

The shepherd uses a comparison as he goes on to say:

I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots [[Song 1:9](#)].

As I have mentioned before, when the word love is used, it is the bridegroom speaking to the bride. When the person is addressed as beloved, it is the bride who is speaking to the bridegroom.

"I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots." When Moses and the children of Israel came to the Red Sea in their flight from Egypt, they found that any retreat was blocked by Pharaoh's chariots which were rapidly approaching. It was a fearsome army with horses and chariots and banners flying above the chariots. It was an overwhelming sight. The bridegroom is saying that he is overwhelmed by the beauty of this country, hillbilly girl. She has none of the graces of the court. She has never been to a beauty parlor. She really has never taken care of herself. But she has a striking natural beauty.

He goes on to describe the things that he notices.

Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold. We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver [[Song 1:10-11](#)].

"Thy cheeks are comely." Her neck is beautiful. How lovely this is and how intimate. He says that he intends to cover her with jewelry. He sees her cheeks comely with jewels, her neck with chains of gold. He speaks of the parts of the body that appeal in a love affair. I am sure there are many of you ladies who noticed the eyelashes of your husband -- of all things! You noticed his physique. You husbands noticed the cheeks and the eyes of your wife, and even the little ears, like shells -- and all that sort of thing. He is speaking of this girl who will be his bride.

Now in the spiritual sense, the bride is the church, and the bridegroom is the Lord Jesus Christ. Does He find any beauty in the church? Friend, He found all of us lost sinners. The Shulamite girl had a natural beauty even though it had been neglected, but we don't even have that. There is nothing about us that could be appealing to Christ. We bring nothing to Him; He provides everything for us.

The same picture can be applied to Israel. When He came down to deliver the children of Israel, He didn't say, "I'm going to free you because you're such a superior people, superior to the Egyptians." They weren't. Actually, they were small and inferior. Neither did He say, "You have been so faithful to Me." They had been unfaithful -- completely faithless, living in idolatry. They had deserted God. They had turned their backs upon God and were engaged in gross immorality. Then what was it that appealed to God? Why did He waste His time with them? The answer is given by God to Moses: ". . . I have

heard their groaning" ([Acts 7:34](#)). That appealed to God. The answer lies totally in His love and grace. It was the lost condition that caused Him to provide a salvation for Israel. And He said that He remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God is faithful to His Word. When He says he will do a thing, He intends to make that promise good.

And it was our wretched, lost condition that caused Him to provide a salvation for us, for the church. God tells us that we will be saved if we will do nothing more than put our trust in Christ!

"We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver" -- this is a picture of what our heavenly Bridegroom will do for believers. The passage in [Ephesians 5](#) makes this so very clear. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for the church. He did it so that He might sanctify and cleanse the church with the washing of water by the Word. That is a real miracle soap, by the way. He did this so that He might present the church to Himself, a glorious church without a spot or a wrinkle but holy -- set apart for Him -- and without blemish. What has happened to the church? He has redeemed us. He has paid the price for us. He has subtracted our sins and has added His righteousness. We are covered with the righteousness of Christ, we stand complete in Him, accepted in the Beloved.

Feasting At The Round Table (1:12)

While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof [[Song 1:12](#)].

Some have translated this, "While the king is on his circuit." They interpret it to mean while he is out going through the kingdom. Others have translated this, "While the king is at his banquet," which I think is probably the best translation that could be given. Very literally it is, "While the king sitteth at his round table" -- that is the circuit. It is actually a round table where he either sits or reclines with his guests around the banquet table.

The translation is important because this verse carries with it a deeper spiritual meaning. The bridegroom brings in all of His invited guests to the banquet table. We can go down through history and mark those who have accepted the invitation to the banquet of the Bridegroom. When He was born, the shepherds came down from the hilltops to see Him in the stable. Then wise men came out of the East to present Him with gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. John Milton expressed it like this:

See how from far upon the Eastern road,
The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet;
O run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;
Have thou the honor first thy Lord to greet.

David had the round table in mind when he wrote, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over" ([Ps. 23:5](#)).

A towheaded boy in southern Oklahoma heard the invitation and, thank God, accepted it. I have been sitting at His table for a long, long time. Are you sitting at that round table? You have an invitation to come. Jesus says to you, "Behold, I stand at the door, and

knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" ([Rev. 3:20](#)). Say, why don't you come and sit at the round table? Sir Lancelot may have had the privilege of sitting at King Arthur's round table, but that was nothing compared to Christ's round table!

"While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." The spikenard is the fragrance of Christ's life -- how wonderful it is! This same fragrance should be in our lives by association with Him. Sitting at His table will do this for us. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is a very important service if it is a time of real communion with Him. If it is merely a form and ritual to you, forget it -- it is of no value.

I received a letter from a lady in Miami who wrote, "I had never heard anyone say that we should tell the Lord Jesus we love Him. I had never said it, but I have loved Him. Ever since I heard you say that we should tell Him, at morning, noon, and night (I have been making up for lost time), I tell Him that I love Him." Then she added, "The Word of God has taken on a new color -- a new meaning." How wonderful! We need the fragrance of Christ in our lives.

The Bundle Of Myrrh In The Bosom (1:13)

Now the bride makes a statement which is quite intimate -- but don't be afraid of it and run from it.

A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night
betwixt my breasts [[Song 1:13](#)].

The original permits us to translate this several different ways: "It shall lie all night betwixt my breasts." What is "it"? Well, it is the bundle of myrrh.

For the believer, the bundle of myrrh represents Christ. You recall that one of the gifts the wise men brought to Him was myrrh. When Christ died, Joseph and Nicodemus brought myrrh to put on His body. The myrrh speaks of His entire life from birth to death. My friend, Christ should lie heavy upon your breast and upon your heart at night. When you wake up during the night, what do you think about? Do you begin to worry about the next day? I must confess that I do a lot of that. But it is wonderful to be able to turn that off and to turn to Him at night when I'm anxious or worried. We need to follow the admonition in [Philippians 4:8](#): "Finally, brethren [when you get to the end of your rope], whatsoever things are true [that is Christ], whatsoever things are honest [that is also Christ], whatsoever things are just [that is the Lord Jesus], whatsoever things are pure [He is pure], whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (*italics mine*). In other words, meditate upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

A bundle of mellifluous myrrhe,
Is my Beloved best
To me, which I will bind between
My breasts, while I do rest
In silent slumbers.
-- Troth-plight Spouse

A friend of mine said it this way: "When I go to bed at night, the last thing I do is pull up the covers, look up, and say, 'Lord Jesus, I love you.' " Isaac Watts wrote it like this:

As myrrh new bleeding from the tree,
Such is a dying Christ to me;
And while He makes my soul his guest,
My bosom, Lord, shall be thy rest.
Oh, friend, let's think upon the Lord Jesus Christ. How wonderful He is!
Erskine wrote it this way:
From this enfolded bundle flies
His savor all abroad:
Such complicated sweetness lies
In my Incarnate God.

My Christian friend, you miss so much when you are satisfied with some little course on how to live the Christian life or on going through some little ritual. Oh, to have Him as the very object of your life, the One who brings in the excitement, the ecstasy, the fellowship, and the joy. His grace and His love and His mercy are all yours -- just open the door. Jesus is knocking right now.

The Cluster Of Camphire (1:14)

The bride continues to speak of her delight in her bridegroom.

My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of
En-gedi [[Song 1:14](#)].

The "camphire" mentioned here is the cypress. In some versions it is translated "henna flowers," and the flowers of the cypress are that color. Scholars have done a great deal of study of different plants mentioned in this book. The cypress is a tree that grows in profusion in Palestine and in Turkey. As I traveled in that area, I was most impressed by the great rows of cypress trees. Here is a statement about the cypress from Kitto, which I would like to pass on to you. The camphire "is now generally agreed to be the Henna of the Arabians. The deep color of the bark, the light green of the foliage, and the softened mixture of white-yellow in the blossoms, present a combination as agreeable to the eye as the odour is to the scent. The flowers grow in dense clusters, the grateful fragrance of which is as much appreciated now as in the time of Solomon. The women take great pleasure in these clusters, hold them in their hand, carry them in their bosom, and keep them in their apartments to perfume the air."

Now notice the comparison of camphor or cypress to the bridegroom -- what a lovely thing it is: "My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi."

En-gedi, another place that I have visited, is down by the Dead Sea. It is one of those wonderful oases in the desert because there are springs there. You may recall that the area around En-gedi is a wilderness where David hid from Saul. It is a good hiding place -- I don't see how anyone could be found in those barren hills. But at En-gedi many kinds of lovely spices are grown. It is a very interesting spot in the midst of that desolate desert, and the bridegroom is like a cluster of camphor in the vineyards of En-gedi. He is like a row of those stately trees with that lovely fragrance.

Christ as our Beloved is represented here as being full of attractive beauty and an aromatic fragrance. I emphasize the deity of Christ very often, but I wonder sometimes if I give a lopsided view of Him. Have you ever stopped to think how lovely He was in His person? He came and took upon Himself our humanity, and He was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. There was no sin in Him. How wonderful He was! There was nothing lopsided about His personality. You may recall that in the Old Testament the meal offering typified the even quality of Christ's personality. It was well-beaten flour -- never coarse or lumpy.

Frankly, most of us are lumpy -- I don't mean physically, but psychologically. All of us are a little "off" in one way or another. We all have our peculiarities. One man talking to another made the statement, "You know we all have our peculiarities." The man replied, "I don't believe that. I don't think I have any peculiarities." The first man said, "All right. Let me ask you a question. Do you stir your coffee with your right hand or your left hand?" He answered, "I stir it with my right hand." "There," he said triumphantly, "that's your peculiarity. Most people use a spoon!" So, you see, we may not stir our coffee with our hand, but we all have peculiarities. We are lumpy; He was not.

He is the perfect human in His incarnation. He is lovely. He is the bundle of camphor. He is the One of whom John could say with enthusiasm and deep expression, ". . . Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" ([John 1:29](#)). If you will hear Him, your soul shall live. Or, as the psalmist says, "O taste and see that the LORD is good . . ." ([Ps. 34:8](#)). The Lord Jesus was a sacrifice -- He ". . . hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" ([Eph. 5:2](#)). He typified the burnt offering that ascended up to heaven. It all speaks of the fact that God is completely satisfied with what Jesus did for you and for me. He is satisfied with Jesus. He said, ". . . This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" ([Matt. 3:17](#)). He has never said that about Vernon McGee, and probably He has never said it about you. But He has declared that He is satisfied with Jesus.

Friend, are you satisfied with Jesus? I don't think many people are. If they were, they wouldn't be running here and there over the face of the earth, trying to find satisfaction in something else. People run to hear this thing and that thing, always searching for something that is new. We can even become so engrossed in the mechanics and the details of Bible study that we lose sight of the person of Jesus Christ. How wonderful He is! "My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi."

There is another interesting symbol in the "bundle" of camphire. There is a great emphasis in the Scriptures on the oneness of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only begotten Son of the Father. He is the one good Shepherd. He is the one true Vine. He is the one Light of the world. He is the one Servant of the Father. He is the one Sacrifice for sin. He is the one Way, the one Truth, the one Life. Yet in His perfect unity there is a fullness that is absolutely inexhaustible. He is also a cluster of fragrant flowers. There is a oneness in Him; but, oh, in Him there is everything. Innumerable graces crowd harmoniously together in the Lamb of God. In Him we can find the faith of Abraham, the persuasiveness of Jacob, the meekness of Moses, the zeal of Elijah, the holiness of Job, the love of John. They are all full and perfect in Him. In Him are found truth, righteousness, wisdom, love, pity, friendship, majesty, might, sovereignty, lowliness,

patience, faith, zeal, courage, holiness, and all the graces. If I have left out any of His qualities, they ought to be included in this list because He is everything. He is all in all. And He is ours. That is the wonder of it all.

Behold, Thou Art Fair (1:15-17)

Now after the bride has expressed her adoration of the bridegroom, he says this to her:

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes [[Song 1:15](#)].

And her instant response is in the following verse: "Behold, thou art fair, my beloved."

She is the one who said, "Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me." But he says to her, "Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair."

My friend, we as the bride of Christ have sinned. We can confess with Daniel, "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments" ([Dan. 9:5](#)). This is the confession of every person if he is a child of God. But our Lord Jesus intercedes for us: ". . . thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word" ([John 17:6](#)). That is our High Priest pleading for you and me. Because we are in Christ, the Father sees no iniquity in us, as God would not see the iniquity of Jacob or perverseness in Israel and would not permit Balaam to curse them. God went down and dealt with His own people; He wouldn't let them get by with sin. But God would not let a heathen prophet curse Israel. He saw Israel in Christ. That is the way He sees us today. "Behold, thou art fair."

The secret of this beauty is in this: "Thou hast doves' eyes." Doves are common emblems of chastity and constancy. Her eyes are fixed upon the bridegroom, and all her beauty is the reflected beauty of the bridegroom. Jesus said, "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" ([Matt. 6:22](#)) -- and also full of beauty. "But if thine eye be evil [or double], thy whole body shall be full of darkness . . ." ([Matt. 6:23](#)). A believer who has an eye for anything equally with Christ has no beauty in His sight. Jesus laid it on the line: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" ([Matt. 10:37](#)). It is important for you to answer this question: Do you have your eye fixed upon the Lord Jesus today?

I hear a great deal about "dedication" as I attend many conferences around the country. Folk are always talking about how dedicated they are and how they want to manifest Christ, but these very people are actually lazy. Their service is slipshod. You see, dedication is not something to talk about; dedication to Christ is something you reveal. It will be manifested in your life. If your eye is upon Him, then His beauty will be reflected in you.

The bridegroom has told the bride how wonderful she is. Now she turns right around and says the very same thing to him.

Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green. The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir [[Song 1:16-17](#)].

The Bridegroom is beautiful to those of us who believe. He is altogether lovely. Augustine wrote: "He is fair in heaven, fair in the earth; fair in the virgin's womb [He was that holy thing], fair in the arms of His parents, fair in the miracles, fair in His stripes . . . fair in laying down His life, fair in receiving it again; fair on the cross, fair in the sepulchre." This was the way Augustine, that great saint of God of the past, described the Lord Jesus.

"Yea, pleasant" -- the word is the Hebrew naim, and it is used to describe the wonderful melodies of the sanctuary: ". . . sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant" ([Ps. 135:3](#)). Christ is pleasant; He is lovely. Why would anyone want to run away from the Lord Jesus! He is so wonderful. The word is also used to describe a chosen earthly friend. David said of his loyal friend, Jonathan, "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me . . ." ([2Sam. 1:26](#)).

What can we say of the One who is greater than Jonathan? Can you say that Jesus is pleasant to you? It is sweet to be with Him. He is the One who can bring rest to us. Are you satisfied with Him? God the Father is satisfied with Him. "Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant."

"Also our bed is green." The "bed" is the English translation for lack of a better word. It is actually the reclining couch where they sat around the banquet. Especially at the time of a marriage feast the banquet couch would be strewn with flowers and green leaves. I think this would be the meaning of the green "bed" if the setting is in Jerusalem.

However, it may be that this is referring back to the time when they first met and is speaking of the green grass where the sheep were. Maybe they just sat on the grass while the sheep were grazing, and that is where they first got acquainted with each other. It would signify the place of communication.

This reminds us of David's psalm: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures . . ." ([Ps. 23:2](#)). When the sheep lies down in green pastures, he is satisfied. He has eaten enough and is full. It is the answer to Christ's invitation to come to Him and rest. He invites all those who are weary and heavy laden to come to Him. The green pastures are there for us. Christian friend, if you are tired and weary, you can rest in Him.

It has been expressed this way by A. Moody Stuart: " 'Heavy laden' and hopeless thou art, seeking peace afar off and passing Him who is near, like Hagar in the desert, with the last drop drained from the now shrivled water-skin, thou art ready to lie down and die. But open thine ears and thou wilt hear one say, 'Come unto Me and I will give you rest'; open thine eyes and thou wilt see the well and the green sward around it; and with a full heart thou wilt answer him, 'Behold Thou art pleasant, also our couch is green.' " What a beautiful picture this is!

Do you remember where He reclined? When He first came to this earth, they put Him in a manger. The last place they laid Him was in the tomb of Joseph. He went to that place so that you and I might sit with Him in green pastures.

Chapter 2

The Rose Of Sharon (2:1)

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys [[Song 2:1](#)].

In my printed notes on this verse I have said that here the bride speaks of herself, that she is not boasting, but comparing herself to the lowly and humble flowers of that land. Some of the newer translations indicate that she is the one who is speaking here. Well, I want to say that I no longer believe that this is her voice, but that it is the voice of the bridegroom. If she is the one who is speaking, this is actually a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ and His reflected beauty. "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys" is a statement that none of the sons of men could be making. I believe these are the words of the Lord Jesus, not the words of the bride. Many of the older translators have tried to make it clear that it is the king speaking. In the old English Bibles this is said to be the voice of Christ, the bridegroom. In the French and Italian and Portuguese Bibles this is designated as the voice of Christ. Many of the church fathers applied these words to the Lord Jesus.

These words describe the Lord Jesus. He says, ". . . for I am meek and lowly in heart" ([Matt. 11:29](#)). If you put a statement like that on my lips, or your lips, or the lips of the angel Gabriel, it wouldn't be humility at all; it would actually be pride. It is true humility from the lips of the Lord Jesus because He stooped in order that He might become meek and lowly. He came down from heaven's glory, and anything beneath heaven is humility on His part.

So here He says, "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." These are two very interesting flowers. I suppose that among all the flowers the rose has always been -- especially in the East -- the one that tops the list. And the rose of Sharon is an unusually beautiful flower. The valley of Sharon is that coast valley that goes all the way from Joppa up to Haifa. I have traveled the length and breadth of it several times. It is beautiful at any season of the year. It is a valley where you can see a great many flowers. I took pictures of them, especially the poppy fields. You have probably heard that the finest citrus fruit in the world is grown in Israel. Sharon is the valley where most of it is grown. The rose grows in profusion in that valley. It is the very beautiful flower that speaks of Him.

I do not think roses originally had thorns. I don't think they were intended to be thorny. But as we know them today, they still have thorns. Even the very beautiful rose reminds us that the earth is under a curse and brings forth thorns and thistles (see [Gen. 3:18](#)).

An ancient author wrote: "If the king were set over flowers, it would be the rose that should reign over them, being the ornament of the earth, the splendor of plants, the eye of flowers, the beauty of the field."

Now here is something quite interesting. When Jesus said, ". . . I am the bread of life . . ." ([John 6:35](#)), He was saying that He is something that is necessary. Bread is the staff of life. We need it to keep us going. It is a necessity of life. He is that food to the perishing

sinner. Thousands have reached up a dying hand, a feeble hand, in faith, and have taken the bread. And they have eaten, and they have lived. Jesus also said, "I am the true vine . . ." ([John 15:1](#)). As the true vine, He gives the glorious, wonderful joy of the Lord. The Scripture says, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts" ([Prov. 31:6](#)). Christ gives joy -- not the alcoholic beverage, but the real joy of the Lord. However, when He says that He is "the rose of Sharon," He is presenting Himself not as a necessity but as an object of pure admiration and delight to the children of men. What a wonderful human being He was! We need to behold Him and let Him occupy our thoughts. He is the One of truth and honesty and purity and beauty upon whom we are to think.

As He walked along with His disciples through the fields, He said, ". . . Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin" ([Matt. 6:28](#)). I think He would say to you and me today, "Consider the Rose of Sharon!" In other words, consider Him. We find this same invitation in Hebrews: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" ([Heb. 3:1](#)). Consider Jesus Christ.

The Lily Of The Valleys (2:2)

"I am . . . the lily of the valleys." This may be a reference to the valley of Esdraelon. This valley has beautiful flowers in it too. Actually, there is a profusion of flowers in all the valleys -- along the coast south of Joppa, in the Jordan valley, around the Sea of Galilee. What is the lily of the valleys? There have been questions as to which flower is meant. Apparently it was the iris. The iris grows wild over there, and one can still see a great many of them. I am of the opinion that it does refer to that humble plant, the iris. He is the beautiful, stately rose and the humble iris. "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys."

As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters
[[Song 2:2](#)].

Bonar expressed it in this way: "Close by these lilies there grew several of the thorny shrubs of the desert; but above them rose the lily, spreading out its fresh green leaf as a contrast to the dingy verdure of these prickly shrubs -- 'like the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.' " In other words, among "daughters" (meaning here, the daughters of Jerusalem) the bride stands out as a lily among thorns.

Christ is the lily of the valleys -- He is pure, He is lovely, He is beautiful, therefore His bride is a lily also, because she bears the image of His loveliness and reflects it to men. This is what the church is to do today. We are to reveal to a world that is filled with thorns, briars, and thistles, the beauty of Christ.

The Apple Tree In The Wood (2:3)

Now the bride speaks of her beloved using the "trees of the wood" in her comparison --

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved
among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
and his fruit was sweet to my taste [[Song 2:3](#)].

"The apple tree among the trees of the wood" is a picture of Christ.

Now you may wonder what kind of tree she is talking about. Actually, apples are not grown in that land. I suppose they could be grown, but they would not be very good. The climate is much as it is here in Southern California. We can grow apples, but they are not very good apples because apples require a colder climate. The "apple" referred to here is actually a citron fruit, probably an orange tree. I have three orange trees in my yard here in Pasadena, and they make very good shade trees. They are a tree of beauty, and when they blossom, I sit on my patio and enjoy the fragrance of the orange blossoms in spring. No wonder they are used for weddings! And the luscious fruit which the tree bears is both beautiful and healthful.

There are citrus groves in the valley of Sharon, which are said to produce the finest citrus fruit in the world. It has always grown there. The citrus was transplanted to California years ago; it didn't grow here naturally. But it is native to Palestine. There the green of the citrus groves is beautiful to see.

Notice that she says, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." The orange tree affords thick shade like the ". . . shadow of a great rock in a weary land" ([Isa. 32:2](#)) and refreshing fruit. Christ is like this wonderful fruit tree in contrast to the fruitless trees of the woods.

The Banqueting House (2:4)

He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love [[Song 2:4](#)].

In this is the story of the Shulamite girl whose heart was won by a shepherd who later came as King Solomon to claim her and who took her back to the palace in Jerusalem. Now he takes her to the banqueting house.

In this there is a beautiful picture of the church which will be the bride of Christ. It also reveals the personal relationship which is possible between the Lord Jesus Christ and each individual believer.

"He brought me to the banqueting house." This probably looks forward to that day of the final banquet which is called the "marriage supper of the Lamb." You and I as believers will be there by the grace of God. That is when full satisfaction will be made. But already He has brought me to the table of salvation, and He has brought me to the table of fellowship with Him. He prepares the table before me, the table of the Word of God, and He tells me to eat and be full. He brings me to a table of good things. How good and gracious He is!

We can go back to the birth of the Lord Jesus and see that already He has brought joy unspeakable to a group of people. There were old Simeon and Anna back in the temple who were waiting for Him. They had great hope that He would come during their lifetime. One day Joseph and Mary brought the little boy Jesus into the temple. My, that day the temple became a banqueting house for those two old people who had looked for the salvation of the Lord.

Even before that, God had brought Joseph and Mary to the banqueting house. When the angel announced to Mary that she should be the mother of the Savior, she realized that she who was in the line of David would be the one who would bear this child. Notice what she says in her Magnificat: "He hath filled the hungry with good things . . ." ([Luke 1:53](#)), using exactly the same picture as we have in the Song of Solomon: "He brought me to the banqueting house." What a picture we have here!

You recall in chapter 1, [verse 4](#), the girl's prayer was, "Draw me, we will run after thee." We cannot know the ecstasy of this experience unless the Spirit of God gives us discernment and opens our eyes to behold Christ in His beauty and glory. Oh, my friend, let's not be satisfied with eating scraps or, like the prodigal son, getting down to eat with the pigs when God has prepared such a banquet for us!

The Banner Of Love (2:4)

"He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." That banner is still floating over us today. The banner in that day had many meanings. Armies would carry banners with them when they went to war. I think all the various meanings of banners are included when she says, "His banner over me was love."

The banner of an army, as, for example, the banners of the Roman legions, was an emblem of conquest. The Son of God still goes forth to war. There is a battle today for the souls of men. I remember how I resisted Him. I shall never forget the excuses I made for not going to a young people's conference. I thought they were a bunch of sissies who were going there, and I didn't want to go with that crowd. I wasn't interested. But, you know, He opened up the way, and the first thing I knew I was there. Before I knew it, I had made a decision in my heart for Him. His banner over me was a banner of conquest.

The banner is also an emblem of protection. When the Lord Jesus came into this world, the Father testified, ". . . This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" ([Matt. 3:17](#)), and the enemies of Jesus could not touch Him until His hour had come. He was protected. When the time had come, they took Him and crucified Him. We will never understand how terrible that was. He cried out in that hour, ". . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" ([Matt. 27:46](#)). His enemies thought that since God had forsaken Him they could do as they pleased with Him. They mocked Him, saying, "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God" ([Matt. 27:43](#)). But God was still pleased with His Son; He delighted in Him, and He raised Him from the dead. He delivered Him from death. And now that banner of salvation and protection is over all those who are His. "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep [that is, be on guard duty over] your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" ([Phil 4:7](#)). He will protect you.

The banner is also an emblem of enlistment. You can enlist as a soldier. By the way, His army is entirely a volunteer army. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" ([Rom. 12:1](#)). "If ye love me, keep my commandments" ([John 14:15](#)). What if you don't love Him? Then forget it! This is a banner for enlistment on a voluntary basis. "His banner over me was love."

Lovesick (2:5-7)

Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love
[Song 2:5].

The Holy Spirit of God has brought the saved soul into a personal relationship with Christ that is satisfying. I repeat: God is satisfied with Jesus and what He did for you. Are you satisfied? Do you find joy and satisfaction and delight in the person of Christ? Spend time in this Song of Solomon. Great men of God down through the ages have spent time in this book, men like Moody and McChesney. Personally, I have spent too little time in this book, but it has become very meaningful to me.

When I went to Nashville, Tennessee, to pastor a church, I succeeded a great man of God. I always loved to go out to visit him. I never talked to that man without learning something new from the Word of God. One day he told me, "Vernon, the other night I was lying in bed, and I thought how wonderful Christ is. It just seemed to me that there was glory all around my bed. Don't misunderstand -- I was not seeing things. It was just so wonderful to contemplate the person of Christ. Finally my body was so worked up that I couldn't go to sleep, and I had to cry out to God, 'Oh Lord, turn off the glory. This old body of mine can't stand any more of it.' " Imagine the experience of Paul when he was caught up to the third heaven! You see, most of us haven't even gotten our foot in the door yet. We know so little about what it is to have this kind of fellowship with Him. Of course it will have its final fulfillment when we come to "the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Erskine, who has written many wonderful things, expressed it like this:

The love, the love that I bespeak,
Works wonders in the soul;
For when I'm whole it makes me sick,
When sick, it makes me whole.
I'm overcome, I faint, I fail,
Till love shall love relieve;
More love divine the wound can heal,
Which love divine did give.
More of the joy that makes me faint,
Would give me present ease;
If more should kill me, I'm content
To die of that disease.

This wonderful love of God is a paradox. We long for it, and yet the glory of it all is more than we can bear.

His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace
me [Song 2:6].

"His left hand is under my head" -- He is able to save us to the uttermost. "His right hand doth embrace me" -- He is able to keep us from temptation and protect you and me down here.

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the
hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he
please [Song 2:7].

What is it that will wake Him up? What is it that would disturb Him in His fellowship with you? It is the sin and waywardness in your life. Not only are we to be satisfied with Him, but, oh, that He might be satisfied with us!

We have come now to the second song. Apparently, Solomon has been away on a trip. The bride has been looking forward in great anticipation to his coming home. What a wonderful thing it is to see the excitement of the bride as she looks forward to the coming of the bridegroom. We will find its final fulfillment, I believe, in the anticipation of the church for the return of Christ to take the church out of the world.

The Voice Of The Beloved (2:8)

The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills [[Song 2:8](#)].

"The voice of my beloved!" The Lord Jesus had this to say concerning His voice: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" ([John 10:27-28](#)). "The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh. . . ." Have you ever considered that at the Rapture of the church it is the voice of the Son of God that is to be heard? The church is made up of those people who have heard about Him. We have heard of His death and burial and resurrection. We have trusted Him. We listen to Him today, so when He comes we are going to know His voice. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice." The sheep know who He is.

When the Lord Jesus comes to take His church out of this world, ". . . the Lord himself [He will come personally] shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God . . ." ([1Thess. 4:16](#)). The "shout," the "voice," and the "trump" are all His voice. "The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh." What a picture of the Rapture!

Contrast this to the coming of the Lord Jesus to rule and to reign on this earth. Then it will not be the sound of a voice but a tremendous sight of glory. The appeal is not to the ear as it is in the Rapture; the appeal is to the eye when He comes to the earth. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" ([Matt. 24:30](#)). But at the Rapture it will be the "voice of my beloved!"

"Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills." This is poetic language, of course. This is a song, and God is trying to speak to us through it.

There is a great deal said about the feet of Jesus. In fact, I developed a series of messages several years ago about the members of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. I spoke of the eyes of Jesus that were stained with tears. I spoke of the lips of Jesus, and I spoke of His hands. I spoke of the feet of Jesus.

"He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places" ([Ps. 18:33](#)). Aijeleth Shahar, which means the "hind of the morning," is the title to [Psalm 22](#). It reveals the Lord Jesus Christ in the day of His sorrow, in His suffering and death upon the cross. It is a picture of the hind of the morning. All night long the dogs had been

following the hind. They had torn at his flesh. They had attempted to destroy him. "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet" ([Ps. 22:16](#)). But when the sun comes up, what do we find? He is the hind of the morning, standing on the mountain peak. He has been delivered out of death. He is coming back, my friend. He is skipping upon the hills; He is leaping upon the mountains. I can't think of a more wonderful, more poetic picture of the Lord Jesus Christ in His return to earth.

I like the way Erskine expresses it:

When manifold obstructions met,
My willing Saviour made
A stepping-stone of every let,
That in his way was laid.

He took stumbling blocks and made them into stepping stones. He made a way for us, and He is the way for us. We have the picture of Him coming again, this One who is the hind, or the roe, or the young hart who is leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills.

Now He is drawing closer --

The voice of my Beloved sounds,
Over the rocks and rising grounds;
O'er hills of guilt, and seas of grief,
He leaps, he flies to my relief.

Behind Our Wall (2:9)

My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice [[Song 2:9](#)].

Today He stands behind the wall. He has gone to be at God's right hand, and we are way down here. It is like the time He went to the mountain to pray after He had fed the five thousand, and His disciples were down on the Sea of Galilee in a storm. That is the way it is today. I am down here in a storm; He is up yonder at God's right hand.

He is on the other side of the wall, and everything under the sun is trying to keep us from Him: the world, the flesh, and the devil. But He still says to us the same thing that He said to Zacchaeus: ". . . Make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house" ([Luke 19:5](#)). He still tells us that he wants to come in and sup with us, as He went into the home of that old publican and had fellowship with him. He will come to you if you will invite Him in. This is the One of whom John the Baptist said, ". . . there standeth one among you, whom ye know not" ([John 1:26](#)). And today the world does not know Him. He is behind a wall -- a wall of indifference, a wall of rebellion against God, a wall of sin. What a picture!

The Song Of His Return (2:10-13)

My beloved spake, and said unto me,
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;

The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;

The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away [[Song 2:10-13](#)].

"Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. He did it because He is going to come to take the church out of this world. He is going to present it to Himself as a church that is purified -- all of us believers need that purifying. He sanctifies and cleanses us with the washing of water by the Word. That is the reason we have Bible study. He wants to present to Himself a glorious church, without a spot or wrinkle. He wants it to be holy and without blemish. That is why He calls, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

"For, lo, the winter is past" -- it is cold down here in this world.

"The rain is over and gone" -- the storms of life will then have abated. Are you having a hard time today, Christian friend? Christ said you would: ". . . In the world ye shall have tribulation . . ." ([John 16:33](#)). Don't be upset if you are having trouble. It is one of the marks that you belong to Him, that you are a child of God. But when He comes, all the trouble will be over. He will wipe away all tears from your eyes. Every broken heart will be healed. Every sorrow will have vanished away when we are in His presence. "The winter is past, the rain is over and gone."

"The flowers appear on the earth." When the Lord Jesus comes for His own and takes them out of this world to the beautiful home which He has prepared, I believe it will be to a beautiful garden of flowers. I like to think that in the New Jerusalem there will be a profusion of flowers.

"The time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle [turtledove] is heard in our land." "The time of the singing of birds" is another very lovely expression. There is going to be a great deal of singing when we come into His presence.

Have you ever noticed that there is a great deal of singing that opens the story of the Gospels? Dr. Luke is the writer who starts farther back in the account of the birth of Christ than any of the other gospel writers, and he recorded the songs. There is the song of Zacharias, the song of Elisabeth, the song of Mary, the song of Anna, and the song of Simeon. There were a lot of songs connected with His birth. The church began singing, and the joy of these people is what called attention to them in the Roman world. Some day when we come into His presence we will sing a new song to the Lord, for He has done wondrous things! I can't sing it now because God didn't create me with a voice that could sing, but when I have a new body, I'm going to sing that new song. Until then I can lift my heart in the praise that is due Him. The very singing of the birds of the air and the bursting buds of the flowers of the earth should remind us of the debt of joyful gratitude we owe for His great salvation. Kingwellmersh expressed it poetically:

O sing unto this glittering glorious king,

O praise his name let every living thing;
Let heart and voice, like belles of silver, ring
The comfort that this day did bring.

It is interesting to note that in our older Bibles "the time of singing" is rendered "the time of pruning." The season of the singing of birds is also the season of the pruning of the vines. The branch that is pruned for fruit and the song that is pruned for beauty are expressed in the same way by the Hebrew writers, which makes it difficult to determine whether "singing" or "pruning" is intended. Pruning the vines is exactly what the Lord Jesus said He was going to do. He said, "I am the true [genuine] vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth [or prunes] it, that it may bring forth more fruit" ([John 15:1-2](#)). My friend, you and I are living in the time of pruning, but the time of singing is ahead of us. What a picture this is!

"The voice of the turtle [turtledove] is heard in our land." The turtledove is the wild dove which is common today. I saw them in Israel. They looked very similar to the doves in California, only I think they were somewhat smaller. The dove has always been the emblem of peace. The reason for that is that the dove went out and brought back an olive leaf to Noah after the waters of the Flood had receded. That spoke of peace, because the judgment was over.

Also the turtledove speaks to us of our salvation which is complete because the judgment is past. It is past because Christ bore the judgment for us. He has endured it in our behalf. I am saved, not because of who I am, but because of what Christ did. My friend, your sins are either on you or they are on Christ. If your sins are on you, you are yet to come up for judgment. If you have trusted Christ, your sins are on Him. He bore them for you, and the judgment is past. By faith you appropriate the salvation. The turtledove speaks of the peace that He has made for us.

This is the reason that not just a few of the saints will go to meet Christ at the Rapture. There are some folk who believe that only the super-duper saints will go. However, the hope of every believer is to be taken with Christ when He comes for His church. We will go to be with Him, not because we have been super-duper saints, but because He has made peace by the blood of His cross. The turtledove is symbolic of this.

The "turtle" is the turtledove of the morning. Where I live, the turtledove is the first bird to get up in the morning. It heralds a new day that is coming. I love the way Isaac Watts has expressed it -- evidently he spent a great deal of time studying the Song of Solomon:

The legal wintery state is gone,
The mists are fled, the spring comes on;
The sacred turtle-dove we hear
Proclaim the new, the joyful year.
And when we hear Christ Jesus say,
Rise up my Love, and come away,
Our hearts would fain outfly the wind,
And leave all earthly joys behind.

"The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell" -- these are signs of springtime. "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

[1Thessalonians 4:16](#) tells us that ". . . the dead in Christ shall rise first." The Lord Jesus said, ". . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" ([John 14:2-3](#)). "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away."

The Dove In The Clefts Of The Rock (2:14)

O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely [[Song 2:14](#)].

The psalmist made this plea: "O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked . . ." ([Ps. 74:19](#)). Will the Lord deliver us? We are told He will hide us in the clefts of the rock, and that Rock symbolizes Christ. He is the Rock upon whom the church is built. He bore our judgment, and we can rest in Him. That should bring us not only satisfaction but also security. If you are on the Rock today, you are safe. Even if you do not recognize the assurance of this, you are still safe. A little Scottish lady was speaking with great assurance about her salvation. Someone said, "You act as if you were safe and secure on the Rock." She answered, "I am. Sometimes I do tremble on the Rock, but the Rock never trembles under me."

The dove is also an emblem for the Holy Spirit. He descended like a dove on the Lord Jesus. And everyone who is in Christ has that dove-like Spirit dwelling in him. ". . . if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" ([Rom. 8:9](#)). And true believers are like doves in their simplicity and their gentleness. Our Lord admonished us to be ". . . wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" ([Matt. 10:16](#)). Now, I suspect that a dove is a rather stupid bird. The other day as I was driving along, I accidentally hit a dove. The crazy dove stood there on the highway without making a move until the car was about to hit him. I regretted doing that, but I said, "You stupid little bird for staying there like you did!" You see, you and I need not only to be as harmless as doves, but we had better be as wise as serpents in our world today -- or we'll get run over also.

The dove is a timid bird. The Lord says, "They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the LORD" ([Hos. 11:11](#)). The dove needs a hiding place in the clefts of the rock. Christ is a beautiful picture of the Rock who was wounded for us. As someone has said, "I got into the heart of Christ through a spear wound." Augustus M. Toplady's wonderful hymn is based on this thought.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power. . . .
Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

The Little Foxes (2:15)

Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes [[Song 2:15](#)].

They could put up a fence or a wall that would keep out the big foxes, but they had trouble with the little foxes. Those little fellows could sneak through. They were the ones that would sneak in and destroy the grapes and tear up the young vines. This has a message for us. "Foxes" are both subtle sins and fox-like men who corrupt others. Both were resolutely dragged into the light of day by John the Baptist. Regarding the subtle sins, he said, ". . . He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. . . .Exact no more than that which is appointed you. . . . Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages" ([Luke 3:11](#), [13-14](#)). Then John the Baptist pointed his finger at Herod whom our Lord called "that old fox" (see [Luke 13:32](#)) and told him that he had no right to be married to another man's wife. I tell you, a preacher doesn't make himself popular when he says that kind of thing! Old Herod had John the Baptist killed by chopping off his head.

However, it is the young foxes that get into the contemporary church and cause trouble. The little sins spoil the fellowship among believers and spoil a Christian's life. For example there are the little sins of omission. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" ([James 4:17](#)). Here is one of those little foxes. This is the sin of omission. How often do we see something that we should do for God, but we didn't do it? How often have we sinned in this way? We are told that the Lord Jesus went about doing good.

I read
In a book
Where a man called
Christ
Went about doing good.
It is very disconcerting
To me
That I am so easily
Satisfied
With just
Going about.
-- Author unknown

How often we have intended to write a letter, but we didn't write it. How often we have intended to do something for missions, but we neglected to do it. How many times we should have been praying for someone, but we neglected to pray. We think of the words of the prophet Samuel: ". . . God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you . . ." ([1Sam. 12:23](#)). These are little sins of omission. They are the little foxes that spoil the vineyard.

Here is another of those little foxes: ". . . whatsoever is not of faith is sin" ([Rom. 14:23](#)). How often do we take a step on our own, but we try to call it a step of faith. We know it is not really faith; we know we just want to have our way. That is a sin. It is a little fox. It gets in and spoils the work of God. We have a tendency to lean on that very lame and broken reed and try to hold ourselves up with it and maintain a pious attitude. We say, "I am doing this because God is leading me," when we know it is not true. We say it so lightly. Romans tells us that whatever we do that is not of faith is sin.

Showing partiality is another little fox that is seen among God's people. James lowers the boom on that: "But if ye have respect [show partiality] to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors" ([James 2:9](#)). I have had this happen to me just as James described it. I went to a certain church just to visit, not wanting to be recognized. I wanted to hear the preacher. When I went in, the usher was absolutely insulting to me. He said, "You wait right here." Then he came back and said, "Well, I don't have a seat for you. You'll have to stand here in the back." He looked at me for a moment, then said, "Oh, you're Dr. McGee! I'll get a chair and let you sit right here!" How tragic it is to see in some churches a well-known or a wealthy man acknowledged in the service and some poor man, who probably is more godly, absolutely ignored. That is a little fox that really wrecks God's work in our day.

Then there is the little fox of not giving freely to God. It is not the amount of the giving that is the only thing that is wrong about it. It is the attitude of giving, the hypocrisy of it all. We sing songs such as, "Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small" -- then we put a quarter into the collection plate! We actually sing lies. We pretend we have given ourselves and all that we have to the Lord. Oh, my friend, it is the little foxes that are destroying a lot of the grapes today.

The Night Before Daybreak (2:16-17)

The next wonderful statement follows closely after the song of the bridegroom's return, which is symbolic of the Rapture, that is, Christ's coming again for the church.

[My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies \[Song 2:16\].](#)

This Song of Solomon expresses the highest spiritual state of the relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and the believer. There is no other book of the Bible which portrays this relationship any better than this little book, and there is no higher plane than this right here: "My beloved is mine, and I am his." This is one of the deepest, most profound of all theological truths which our Lord Jesus put into seven simple words: ". . . ye in me, and I in you" ([John 14:20](#)). The bride says, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

The Lord Jesus said in effect, "Down here I took your place when I died on the cross. I am in you. Now you are to show forth My life down here in this world." (Of course we can only do that in the power of the Holy Spirit.) But we are in Him up there -- seated in the heavenly places, accepted in the Beloved, joined to Him, risen with Christ. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" ([Col. 3:1](#)). How wonderful! Oh, my friend, if you are a child of God, why don't you tell Him that you love Him?

You and I live in a day when we may not have very much of this world's goods; yet we are rich. We don't glory men; we glory in Christ. "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" ([1Cor. 3:21-23](#)). We belong to Christ. He is ours. He belongs to us. He is our Savior. He is our Shepherd. We ought to draw very close to Him and appropriate these wonderful spiritual blessings that are ours. It is a high level of spiritual life when you and I can say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

"He feedeth among the lilies." This again refers to the flower-strewn couch upon which He reclines at the banqueting table. It speaks of satisfaction, of fellowship, of joy, of everything that is wonderful. This world is seeking these things. This world is looking for a good time. This world wants to "live it up." Well, let's have a good time and live it up by sitting at Christ's table and rejoicing in Him. This is a high spiritual level. I'm afraid that many of us do not ". . . attain unto it" ([Ps. 139:6](#)). Therefore we have to cry out as the bride did, "Draw me, we will run after thee." We can't run, we cannot run the race that is set before us until we not only see Jesus but appropriate His power in our lives. "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved,
and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of
Bether [[Song 2:17](#)].

We come back to that picture of Christ as the hind of the morning. Remember that we saw Him on that bright morning ([v. 8](#)) standing on the mountain peak in triumph. All during the night the hunters had been after His life, and the fierce dogs had been leaping at Him. How terrible it was! He went down through the doorway of death, but He came up through the doorway of resurrection. Now, in light of that, although you and I are presently living in a dark world, we can look forward to the daybreak. My friend, let the redemption that you have in Christ and all that He has done for you be meaningful to you. Rest upon that. Let that be your comfort; let that be the pillow for your head during the dark hours of this life -- "until the day break, and the shadows flee away."

Chapter 3

As we begin chapter 3 we are still in the second song, but I would say that we have come to the second stanza of it. However, this does begin a new section, which is set in an altogether different scene.

At the beginning of this book we were up in the hill country of Ephraim where we saw a girl and her family who were tenant farmers. Now Solomon has won her heart and has brought her back with him to Jerusalem.

The Midnight Search (3:1-5)

By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought
him, but I found him not.

I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the
broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth:

I sought him, but I found him not [[Song 3:1-2](#)].

Now the scene has shifted to the palace in Jerusalem to which the king has taken her. She has been left alone -- the king, perhaps, being away on business. What is recorded here is a dream that reflects the anguish of their separation in which she finally goes out to look for him in the streets of the city.

"By night on my bed I sought him." This has a marvelous spiritual application to our relationship with Christ. When we have a big day ahead of us, we think we must have a good night's sleep. If sleep is preferred to Christ, we may get in our eight hours, but we have lost Him who is far better than rest. A. Moody Stuart has put it like this: "But if Christ is first and best and most necessary, if he is more to us than food or sleep, he is often, though not always, quickly found, without actual loss either of the time or of the sleep which we were willing to sacrifice for his sake. Our sleep is then sweet unto us and refreshing, for the Lord himself is dwelling in us, and resting with us."

"I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets." The getting out of bed and going about the city in her search indicates a determination to seek the Lord.

"I sought him, but I found him not." This is her honest confession. A great many folk never find Christ because they never seek Him. Oh, how many Christians sit in a church pew every Sunday and never face honestly the fact: "I found Him not." However, He has promised that He will be found of those who seek Him with their whole heart. Or, as James put it, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you . . ." ([James 4:8](#)).

The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said,
Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? [[Song 3:3](#)].

The watchmen seem to have been helpful in directing her to the Beloved. At least, it was only a short distance from them that she found Him.

It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom
my soul loveth:

I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into
my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me
[[Song 3:4](#)].

Oh, my friend, what a tremendous reward for her search -- "I found him whom my soul loveth!" Again I quote A. Moody Stuart (p. 231): "I found him -- I, a man, found the Lord of Glory; I, a slave to sin, found the great Deliverer; I, the child of darkness, found the Light of life; I, the uttermost of the lost, found my Savior, and my God; I, widowed and desolate, found my Friend, my Beloved, my Husband! Go and do likewise, sons and daughters of Zion, and He will be found of you, 'for then shall ye find, when ye search with all your heart.' "

"I held him, and would not let him go." Maintaining unbroken fellowship with Christ requires effort on our part. It is easy to let other interests crowd into our lives so that we lose the sense of His presence. Stuart has well said, "Unheld, the King will go away; He is willing to be held, yet not willing to remain without being held." (This, of course, has no reference to a believer losing his salvation, but of losing his fellowship with Christ.)

"I . . . brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me." When she found Him, she went right back to the place where she had been born, where she had met Him. Many of us need to get back to that first love. Do you remember when you came to Christ? Do you remember how much He meant to you then?

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please [[Song 3:5](#)].

Now that wonderful fellowship with Him is restored.

The Entrance Of Solomon With His Bride (3:6-11)

This last part of the chapter is a little gem in itself. It depicts the return of the king for his bride. This little Shulamite girl had waited a long time for the return of the shepherd to whom she had given her heart. One day she is out in the vineyard working. Down the road there comes a pillar of smoke, and the cry is passed along from one group of peasants to another, "Behold, King Solomon is coming!" -- but she has work to do. Then someone comes to her excitedly, saying, "Oh, King Solomon is asking for you!" Mystified, she says, "Asking for me? I don't know King Solomon!" But when she is brought into his presence, she recognizes that he is her shepherd-lover who has come for her.

He places her at his side in the royal chariot and the procession sweeps on, leaving the amazed country folk speechless at the sudden change in the position of her who had been just one of them.

How beautifully this pictures the glorious reality of the return of Christ, our Beloved, when He comes for His own. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" ([1Thess. 4:16-17](#)).

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant? [[Song 3:6](#)].

This is a description of Solomon as he rides into Jerusalem with his bride. The glory that was Solomon's is beyond description. We will get a glimpse of it in the next few verses.

We as believers are to go through this world as witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. As witnesses we are made new in Christ. Each of us is like the bride who is brought before the Bridegroom and the fragrance of Christ should be upon us as we witness to the world -- "perfumed with myrrh and frankincense." How wonderful the Lord Jesus is! The myrrh speaks of His death and the frankincense of His life. Both were sweet; both were glorious.

Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel [[Song 3:7](#)].

His "bed" is the traveling couch in which the King is carried by bearers.

"Threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel." They are living in days of danger. These are the guards, and they are there for his protection. They are the Secret Service men who have charge of his person to watch over him.

May I say that I think that we need to guard the person of the Lord Jesus. In other words we need to declare our belief in the deity of Jesus Christ, that He was God manifest in the flesh. We must reject the teaching of liberalism. We must reject anything that makes Him just a human Jesus. He was God manifest in the flesh.

They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night [[Song 3:8](#)].

Notice that the guards all have swords. The Scriptures tell us that our sword is the Word of God. They are "expert in war." And we need to know how to use the Word of God. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, and that is the weapon of a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem [[Song 3:9-10](#)].

He has a chariot made out of the cedars of Lebanon. "The bottom thereof of gold" -- imagine, the floor made of gold!

"The midst thereof being paved with love, for [or from] the daughters of Jerusalem." Solomon's chariot is adorned by the needlework of the women of Jerusalem. What beauty there is. But, also, what tremendous emotion and love is displayed there.

Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart [[Song 3:11](#)].

It says, "his mother crowned him." If you go back to the story in [1Kings 1](#), you will find that David didn't really want to crown him. Another son of David, Adonijah, was carrying on a bit of strategy and was trying to get to the throne himself. David was an old man, and he didn't do anything at all about the situation. His favorite son, Absalom, had been killed, and David just didn't seem to have much heart for Solomon. So Nathan the prophet went to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, and said, "We'd better get busy or Adonijah may become the new king." So Bathsheba and Nathan went to King David, and King David said, "Well, bring him in. We'll make him the king." That is the way Solomon was made the king of Israel. I like the way it is stated here: "his mother crowned him." It was his mother who was interested in him. I really think that David was not much interested in making Solomon the new king, even though he was David's son.

"Behold king Solomon." This is a picture of Christ. Behold Him. Behold Him in His birth. Behold Him in His life. Behold Him in His death. Behold Him in His resurrection. Behold Him in His glory today. And behold Him as the One who is coming again for His bride.

Chapter 4

This entire chapter except the last verse is the song of the bridegroom. It expresses Solomon's love for this girl whom he had met up in the hill country and had brought to town, as it were. I suppose that she wore shoes for the first time. Now she is wearing lovely dresses, and she sits at the table of Solomon. What a privilege she had, and she was rejoicing in it.

As we read this chapter, we should see that the Spirit of God is trying to show us Christ's love for us. It is expressed through this very wonderful and personal relationship. It shows to us the love of Christ for the church and His love for the individual believer. This is the love song of the Bridegroom, or the love song of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is obvious that He speaks of the church when He says, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee" ([v. 7](#)). This is Christ speaking of the church, of the believer; He is speaking to you and me. Does that mean then that we are going to have to become perfect? Oh, no. In Ephesians Paul says, ". . . as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" ([Eph. 5:25-26](#)). He's already cleansed us by the blood; through His sacrifice we have the forgiveness of sin, so that there is no charge brought against us. But He is also going to sanctify us and cleanse us by the Word of God. "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" ([Eph. 5:27](#)). He will be the One who will make the church without spot or wrinkle -- we will be seen in Christ. Now He can look at the church and say, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee" because He removed the spot from the church and from each believer.

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead [[Song 4:1](#)].

We find here a very minute description of this girl. It describes the parts of her body, if you please. Now there are two extreme viewpoints of marriage. One is that the emphasis is put upon sex. The other is that there is no emphasis put on sex, that marriage is such a high, holy state that sex doesn't enter into it at all. But when the emphasis is placed completely on sex, then the relationship becomes more like that between two animals. True marriage lies between these two extreme viewpoints. When the bridegroom holds the bride in his arms, their love, their physical love, is consummated.

Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks [[Song 4:2-3](#)].

This is how the bridegroom sees the bride. I'm sure every young fellow has looked into the eyes of some girl and told her what beautiful eyes she has. I met my wife when she was a young schoolteacher. She had black hair, black as a raven's wing, and dark brown eyes. Today there is some gray hair. I tell you, when I met her, I thought her hair was

beautiful, and I told her so. I told her she had beautiful eyes. Now I never told her she had beautiful big toes, because I really don't think her big toes are beautiful. But I do think she is beautiful.

This reveals to us that the Lord Jesus not only loves us but the Lord Jesus knows us. We need to quit kidding ourselves, because we are not kidding Him at all. This means that we can go to Him and tell Him everything. There is no use in trying to cover up, no use in trying to use subterfuge, no use in trying to beat around the bush. We can tell Him everything that we have on our hearts. We can tell Him all about our weaknesses, about our sin, about all the things that are in our hearts and lives. That is the way to deal with them.

Do you have an inferiority complex? Then tell the Lord Jesus about it. He is the only One who has an answer for that. An eminent Christian psychologist here in Southern California years ago told me, "You can't get rid of an inferiority complex. All that the psychologist can do is shift an inferiority complex from one place in the personality to another. The only place where anyone finds a solution to it is at the cross of Christ." I believe that is where people should go with their complexes. Augustine said that our hearts are restless until we come to the Lord. Paul wrote, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" ([Phil. 4:13](#)). Maybe you don't even need to get rid of your inferiority complex. It may help you to find your strength in Him. It may keep you from being a proud, arrogant Christian. It may help you give all the glory to Him.

Do you have a bad habit which you would like to change? Then go to Him and confess it. He is rich in mercy. I think that for years I must have gone to Him two or three hundred times to tell Him about something. He was rich in mercy to me, which means He has a whole lot of it. Although I failed again and again, I kept going back in repentance. It was wonderful to go to Him. Do you know what happened? When the time came, He gave me the victory in His way. Our Lord moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform. He doesn't follow my rules or your rules. He doesn't do it through some gimmick which men have worked out. He helps in His own time and His own way.

May I say to you, He knows us intimately. He knows every tiny detail of our lives. We should never be afraid to go to Him and tell Him everything.

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to
the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense [[Song 4:6](#)].

This is the place where we need to go for the solution to our problems. "The mountain of myrrh" is symbolic of the Cross of Christ, because myrrh speaks of His death. That is where you will find comfort and salvation and help and hope.

"The hill of frankincense" refers to His life, but not simply His earthly life. Paul writes, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" ([2Cor. 5:16](#)) -- now we know Him as the glorified Christ.

The solution to your problem is in knowing Christ. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 2:5](#)). That, my friend, is the reason that I keep saying the answer is in the Word of God. It is ignorance of His Word that causes people to search

elsewhere for answers. It makes a person vulnerable to false teachers who trade on and take advantage of those who are ignorant of the Word of God. But it is through the Word of God that we get acquainted with Jesus Christ and learn to sit at that round table in the banqueting hall which we have seen here in the Song of Solomon. There we can feast with Him, and find satisfaction and joy in Him.

You and I do not realize how much He really loves us. Listen to Him:

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! [[Song 4:9-10](#)].

The bridegroom speaking of the bride typifies the Lord Jesus speaking of believers, those who are His own. This is how much He loves us today. Oh, it would break your heart and my heart if we knew how much He loves us. Only the Spirit of God can make this love real to us. Some folks write out a little motto and stick it on their car bumper and then drive around with it. It says, "Jesus loves you." I wonder, how do you know He loves you? Have you experienced that love yourself? Are you conscious of His love right now? Oh, my friend, He loves you! Fall in love with Him.

Now the bride speaks:

Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits [[Song 4:16](#)].

Remember how the Lord Jesus taught His disciples in the Upper Room in that wonderful discourse that is found in [John 13](#) -- [John 17](#). In the midst of it, in [John 14](#), we find that the Lord Jesus is interrupted again and again by the disciples asking Him questions. The last one to interrupt Him was Judas. Have you ever noticed the question which he asked the Lord? "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" ([John 14:22](#)). He is saying in effect, "Lord, it is wonderful to be here. You are revealing these wonderful truths about Yourself to us, but what about the world outside?"

Now the bride is getting the message. "O north wind" -- that north wind is cold, and it may cause the bride to get very cold. But, "Awake, O north wind." Why? That this spice, this wonderful fragrance might be blown out to others and they might enjoy it. Dr. Ironside adds: "It indicates her yearning desire to be all that he would have her to be." The north wind, he continues, is "that cold, bitter, biting, wintry blast. Naturally she would shrink from that as we all would, and yet the cold of winter is as necessary as the warmth of summer if there is going to be perfection in fruitbearing. It takes the cold to bring out the flavor of apples. And it is so with our lives. We need the north winds of adversity and trial as well as the zephyrs of the south so agreeable to our natures. The very things we shrink from are the experiences that will work in us to produce the peaceable fruits of righteousness. If everything were easy and soft and beautiful in our lives, they would be insipid; there would be so little in them for God that could delight His heart; and so there must be the north wind as well as the south."

It is this kind of life that the Lord Jesus uses to reach the world. He has not forgotten the world.

The bride says to her beloved, "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." This is an invitation he will accept. And in that Upper Room the Lord Jesus said to His questioning disciples, ". . . If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" ([John 14:23](#)).

Chapter 5

In this chapter there seems to be a certain amount of conflict in the mind of the bride about whether they should spend time in fellowship and communion or in going out to discharge their responsibilities. Both are essential. We need to be doing both. We need to sit at the feet of Jesus, but we also need to follow those feet as they go out on the hillsides looking for the lost sheep. We need to follow those feet out into the world, which is a field in which to plant the seed of the Word of God.

I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered
my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my
honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink,
yea, drink abundantly, O beloved [[Song 5:1](#)].

He is inviting her to join with him in fellowship. Our Lord says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" ([Rev. 3:20](#)). That is the fellowship we need. And in connection with fellowship, John writes, ". . . These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" ([1John 1:4](#)). Not only does He want us to have fellowship, but He wants us to have a good time. Are you having a good time as a Christian?

Wonderful letters come to me in response to our radio broadcasts. There are people in hospitals and in rest homes who tell about their sufferings and the diseases with which they are afflicted. But they also write about the wonderful fellowship they have with the Lord Jesus. The tears came to my eyes when I read a letter from one dear lady, who wrote, "At night when the nurse tucks me in I cannot sleep but lie awake for another hour or two. During that time I pray for you until I go to sleep. Then I wake up about [4:30](#) in the morning and I pray for you again." Then she continues in her letter to tell how wonderful it is to have fellowship with the Lord Jesus. That is beautiful!

The Waking Sleep (5:2-5)

Now we come to the fourth canticle, or the fourth song. These are like folk songs.

Now it is the bride who speaks.

I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that
knocketh, saying,

Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night [[Song 5:2](#)].

She says her heart is awake. She is on the alert, watching for him.

"The voice of my beloved" -- he has been busy out in the night while the bride crawled into bed.

The church needs to hear this message today. All believers need to hear this message. Let's get out of bed and get busy. If the Lord has given us health, let us start moving out for Him.

I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? [[Song 5:3](#)].

Now she starts to rationalize. She is already in bed. She has washed her feet to go to bed, and she doesn't want to get out of bed and get her feet dirty.

My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him [[Song 5:4](#)].

Her "bowels," that is, her emotions, were moved for him.

I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock [[Song 5:5](#)].

The background for this was a lovely custom that they had in that day. When a man was in love with a girl and wanted to express his love, he would go to her home and instead of leaving a calling card, he would leave a fragrance. The door was so constructed as to leave an opening so that one could reach through to the inside and remove the bar unless it was locked as well as barred -- which was the case on this occasion. When there was no response from the sleeping bride, the bridegroom placed myrrh on the inside handle of the door to let her know that he had been there. Then she finally came to open the door, the wonderful fragrance was transferred to her fingers. He had left the sweetness of his presence.

The bride is a picture of the church today. The church doesn't go very far from home. Very few get out from under the shadow of the church steeple. Most folk don't even get off the church steps. As a result, they have lost fellowship with the Lord Jesus. Actually, that is one of those little foxes which destroy the grapes. We lose our fellowship when we step out of the will of God. That is what it means to quench the Spirit (see [1Thess. 5:19](#)). It is quenching the Spirit to refuse to go where He wants us to go or to do what He wants us to do.

I think that if we today would get up off our beds, begin to move out and start doing something for God, we would find the sweetness of His presence on the handle of our own bed chamber. We would experience the sweetness of His fellowship.

This is the briefest of the songs, but what a little gem it is!

The Sorrowing Search For The Beloved (5:6-9)

Now we come to the fifth song. In this love story King Solomon has brought this humble Shulamite girl from the hill country of Ephraim to the palace in Jerusalem. In these songs the bride reveals how impressed she is by everything there -- the palace, the throne, and the banquet table of the king. Her song includes her worship and adoration of the king.

But when he came to rouse her to come with him as he was out doing his work as a shepherd, looking for the sheep that were lost, she didn't want to get out of bed. When she finally did go to the door, he was gone. She opened the door and called to him, then she went out to look for him.

I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself,
and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I
could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer [[Song 5:6](#)].

You see, the fellowship had been broken.

I personally believe that there are a great many Christians who have done one of two things: they have grieved the Spirit by sin in their lives, or they have quenched the Spirit by not being obedient to Him. That breaks fellowship with Him and causes us to lose our joy. It does not mean that we lose our salvation, but we will surely lose the joy of our salvation. It does not mean that we have lost the Holy Spirit. He still indwells the believer. We can grieve Him, but we cannot grieve Him away. However, we certainly can lose fellowship with Him, and many Christians are in that position.

Sometime ago a man said to me, "You speak of the reality of Christ in your life. I don't have it." That was a dead giveaway that he was quenching the Spirit of God. He was out of the will of God. I know the man quite well, and I believe the problem was that he was doing what he wanted to do instead of doing what he knew was the will of God. A person can try to mask the truth and say that he is doing the will of God. If he does not have the joy of the Lord, it is a giveaway that he is actually doing his own will.

The bride here has lost her fellowship. I tell you, if you are not doing something for the Lord, you haven't lost your salvation, but you surely are missing sweet fellowship with Him.

The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me,
they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from
me [[Song 5:7](#)].

Do you realize how impotent and powerless we are if we attempt to go out on our own? We may go out with a great deal of enthusiasm, but enthusiasm will never replace fellowship with Him. Today there is a lot of enthusiasm for knocking on doors and witnessing to people. There are certain people who ought to be doing that; there are others who had better not. I have a friend in another state who, when I am there, asks me to play golf with him. I enjoy playing with him, but I have discovered that he is a man who lacks tact even though he has a zeal to witness for the Lord. I have seen him make waitresses angry. I have seen him make strangers that we meet angry. He says to me, "You know, there is surely a lot of opposition to the gospel today, isn't there?" Well, I

couldn't help but say to him, "I don't think there is as much opposition as you think there is. It might have something to do with the way you present the gospel."

Then I called his attention to the way the Lord Jesus witnessed to the woman at the well. One of the most hostile persons that the Lord Jesus ever approached was that Samaritan woman who came down to the well. She was defiant. Have you ever noticed how He approached her? He didn't approach her as if He had something to cram down her throat. He asked her for a drink of water. He took the lowly place by asking her for something. Then He very courteously said, "Oh, I could have given you living water if you had asked for it." Finally she did ask for it, but He didn't offer it until she asked for it.

Before we attempt to cram the gospel down the throats of people, we need to give them a little appetite for it. They should see something in our lives that will make them want to know about the Lord Jesus.

However, it is true that there is an opposition to the Word of God, and we find it coming sometimes from unexpected quarters.

"The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me." This girl is having a difficult time. She is being hurt by those who should have been protecting her.

This same situation occurs in Christian circles. Many a preacher in our society finds himself deserted by a board that has turned against him because his preaching bothers their consciences. Many times opposition to the gospel comes from those who should be protecting it.

Now this girl, the bride, meets the daughters of Jerusalem. Here we find antiphonal singing. The bride sings one part, and the daughters of Jerusalem sing an answering part. This sounds very much like an opera.

The bride says:

I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that
ye tell him, that I am sick of love [[Song 5:8](#)].

"If you find him, tell him how much I miss him. Tell him how much I love him, and let him know that I am looking for him." Her heart is sick and her whole being is yearning after him. The garden has lost its fragrance; the myrrh and frankincense don't mean much to her now; and the beauty of the flowers has withered.

Now in this antiphony the daughters of Jerusalem answer:

What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest
among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved,
that thou dost so charge us? [[Song 5:9](#)].

Their answer sounds rather skeptical. In effect they are saying, "This one that you say means so much to you, why is he more to you than you might expect another to be to us?" "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" Who is this Jesus anyway? What makes you think Jesus is different from anyone else? There have been other great religious leaders. Why do you think that Jesus is different from them? Why do you think

that He is who He claims to be? Jesus was only a man. That is the kind of skepticism we hear.

May I say to you, there has been a lot of discussion about Jesus. There has been more controversy about Him than any person who has ever lived. He is the most controversial figure in history. Let me ask you a question. If someone today tried to show that Julius Caesar was a real rascal, would you get all excited about it and rise to his defense? If someone tried to show that Julius Caesar was a saint, would you be all excited about that and try to argue about it? It wouldn't excite me. I'd let anyone think whatever he wanted to think about Julius Caesar. I wouldn't argue with him. But the minute you mention Jesus Christ, the whole human family chooses sides. It is interesting that God forces us to make a decision about His Son. He wouldn't let Pilate off without making a decision. Pilate tried to evade any involvement. He called for a basin of water and washed his hands, saying, ". . . I am innocent of the blood of this just person . . ." ([Matt. 27:24](#)). How wrong he was! The oldest creed of the church, which has been recited for over nineteen hundred years by multitudes of people, includes these words: "Crucified under Pontius Pilate." Pontius Pilate, you didn't wash your hands; you made a decision. God forced you to make a decision. Pilate thought that he was the judge and that Jesus was the prisoner. He didn't realize that Christ was the judge and he was the prisoner. And still in our contemporary society every man must make a decision.

"What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" In anthologies of religion, great religious leaders are listed who are called founders of religions: Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Ghandi, Buddha, and all the rest. According to Tertullian, the early church father, the Christians in the early church would rather have died than have Jesus put down on a plane with the heathen deities of the Roman Empire. They refused to even take a pinch of incense and place it before the image of Caesar. They wouldn't do it, because their Beloved was different; He was God.

The Beauty Of The Beloved (5:10-16)

Now the bride is going to answer. She is going to respond to their skepticism. You would think that they had her cooled off and that she would tone down what she says about the bridegroom. But it didn't work that way. Actually, she now waxes eloquent concerning him.

My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.

His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.

His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.

His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely.

This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem
[Song 5:10-16].

There is something here that is very obvious, and that is that she describes him in minute detail. Do you know what that means? It means that she knew him. She knew him intimately.

My friend, if you are going to defend the Lord Jesus Christ today, if you are going to witness for Him, you must know Him. Not only do you need to know who He is, but you need to know Him enough to be able to wax eloquent on His behalf. When I say be eloquent, I don't necessarily mean eloquent in language. I mean full of enthusiasm, excitement, love, and zeal for His person. You and I need not only to know Him, but we must love Him. That is the challenge that we find here. The bride knew Him. She knew Him and she loved Him. She says that He is the chiefest among ten thousand.

Many people have written about the person of Christ because He is altogether lovely even in His humanity. Dr. C. I. Scofield, the man who wrote the first notes for The Scofield Reference Bible, wrote about the Lord Jesus in a tract entitled, "The Loveliness of Jesus." Let me share part of it with you:

All other greatness has been marred by littleness, all other wisdom has been flawed by folly, all other goodness has been tainted by imperfection; Jesus Christ remains the only Being of whom, without gross flattery, it could be asserted, "He is altogether lovely."

My theme, then, is: The Loveliness of Christ.

First of all, as it seems to me, this loveliness of Christ consists in His perfect humanity. Am I understood? I do not now mean that He was a perfect human, but that He was perfectly human.

In everything but our sins, and our evil natures, He is one with us. He grew in stature and in grace. He labored, and wept, and prayed, and loved. He was tempted in all points as we are -- sin apart. With Thomas, we confess Him Lord and God; we adore and revere Him, but beloved, there is no other who establishes with us such intimacy, who comes so close to these human hearts of ours; no one in the universe of whom we are so little afraid. He enters as simply and naturally into our twentieth century lives as if He had been reared in the same street. He is not one of the ancients. How wholesomely and genuinely human He is! Martha scolds Him; John, who has seen Him raise the dead, still the tempest and talk with Moses and Elijah on the mount, does not hesitate to make a pillow of His breast at supper. Peter will not let Him wash his feet, but afterwards wants his head and hands included in the ablution. They ask Him foolish questions, and rebuke Him, and venerate and adore Him all in a breath; and He calls them by their first names, and tells them to fear not, and assures them of His love. And in all this He seems to me altogether lovely.

He is altogether lovely. Now the important question is this: Is He altogether lovely to you? Are you able to speak of Him with the enthusiasm the bride had for her bridegroom? We must know Christ intimately if we are to witness of Him. And we must love Him. When one comes to Christ it is not a business transaction. He is wonderful, and

I do not think that we laud Him, glorify Him, lift Him up, worship Him, and bow before Him with thanksgiving enough. He is wonderful any way that you look at Him.

Let me quote again from Dr. Scofield's essay:

The saintliness of Jesus is so warm and human that it attracts and inspires. We find in it nothing austere and inaccessible, like a statue in a niche. The beauty of His holiness reminds one rather of a rose, or a bank of violets.

Jesus receives sinners and eats with them -- all kinds of sinners. Nicodemus, the moral, religious sinner, and Mary of Magdala, "out of whom went seven devils" -- the shocking kind of sinner. He comes into sinful lives as a bright, clear stream enters a stagnant pool. The stream is not afraid of contamination but its sweet energy cleanses the pool.

I remark again, and as connected with this that His sympathy is altogether lovely.

He is always being "touched with compassion." The multitude without a shepherd, the sorrowing widow of Nain, the little dead child of the ruler, the demoniac of Gadara, the hungry five thousand -- what ever suffers touches Jesus. His very wrath against the scribes and Pharisees is but the excess of His sympathy for those who suffer under their hard self-righteousness.

Did you ever find Jesus looking for "deserving poor"? He "healed all their sick." And what grace in His sympathy! Why did He touch that poor leper? He could have healed him with a word as He did the nobleman's son. Why, for years the wretch had been an outcast, cut off from kin, dehumanized. He lost the sense of being a man. It was defilement to approach him. Well, the touch of Jesus made him human again.

A Christian woman, laboring among the moral lepers of London, found a poor street girl desperately ill in a bare, cold room. With her own hands she ministered to her, changing her bed linen, procuring medicines, nourishing food, a fire, and making the poor place as bright and cheery as possible, and then she said, "May I pray with you?"

"No," said the girl, "you don't care for me; you are doing this to get to heaven."

Many days passed with the Christian woman unwearily kind, the sinful girl hard and bitter. At last the Christian said:

"My dear, you are nearly well now, and I shall not come again, but as it is my last visit, I want you to let me kiss you," and the pure lips that had known only prayers and holy words met the lips defiled by oaths and by unholy caresses -- and then, my friends, the hard heart broke. That was Christ's way.

As I read this essay from Dr. Scofield, my thoughts turn back to the very beginning of the Song of Solomon in chapter 1, [verse 2](#): "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine." He wants to bestow His love, His affection, His care, His grace, His mercy upon us today, and we are as hard as that poor sinning girl.

Again, I quote from Dr. Scofield:

Can you fancy Him calling a convention of the Pharisees to discuss methods of reaching the "masses"? That leads me to remark that His humility was altogether lovely, and He, the only one who ever had the choice of how and where He should be born, entered this life as one of the "masses."

What meekness, what lowliness! "I am among you as one that serveth." He "began to wash His disciples' feet." "When He was reviled He reviled not again." "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." Can you think of Jesus posing and demanding His rights?

But it is in His way with sinners that the supreme loveliness of Christ is most sweetly shown. How gentle He is, yet how faithful; how considerate, how respectful. Nicodemus, candid and sincere, but proud of his position as a master in Israel, and timid lest he should imperil it, "comes to Jesus by night." Before he departs "the Master," Nicodemus has learned his utter ignorance of the first step toward the kingdom, and goes away to think over the personal application of "they loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." But he has not heard one harsh word, one utterance that can wound his self-respect.

When He speaks to that silent despairing woman, after her accusers have gone out, one by one, He uses for "woman" the same word as He used when addressing His mother from the cross.

Follow Him to Jacob's well at high noon and hear His conversation with the woman of Samaria. How patiently He unfolds the deepest truths, how gently, yet faithfully He presses the great ulcer of sin which is eating away her soul. But He could not be more respectful to Mary of Bethany.

Even in the agonies of death He could hear the cry of despairing faith. When conquerors return from far wars in strange lands they bring their chiefest captive as a trophy. It was enough for Christ to take back to heaven the soul of a thief.

Yea, He is altogether lovely. And now I have left myself no room to speak of His dignity, of His virile manliness, of His perfect courage. There is in Jesus a perfect equipoise of various perfections. All the elements of perfect character are in lovely balance. His gentleness is never weak. His courage is never brutal. My friends, you may study these things for yourself. Follow Him through all the scenes of outrage and insult on the night and morning of His arrest and trial. Behold Him before the high priest, before Pilate, before Herod. See Him brow-beaten, bullied, scourged, smitten upon the face, spit upon, mocked. How His inherent greatness comes out. Not once does He lose His self-poise, His high dignity.

Let me ask some unsaved sinner here to follow Him still further. Go with the jeering crowd without the gates; see Him stretched upon the great rough cross and hear the dreadful sound of the sledge as the spikes are forced through His hands and feet. See, as the yelling mob falls back, the cross, bearing this gentlest, sweetest, bravest, loveliest man, upreared until it falls into the socket in the rock. "And sitting down, they watched Him there." You watch, too. Hear Him ask the Father to forgive His murderers, hear all the cries from the cross. Is He not altogether lovely? What does it all mean?

"He bore our sins in His own body on the tree."
"By Him all that believe are justified from all things."
"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life."

I close with a word of personal testimony. This is my beloved, and this is my friend. Will you not accept Him as your Savior, and beloved and friend?

That is the end of the quotation, and I want to add my own "Amen" to it. That means I agree with every word of it. My Beloved is the chiefest among ten thousand. He is the One who is altogether lovely.

Was it merely the son of Joseph and Mary who crossed the world's horizon more than nineteen hundred years ago? Was it merely human blood that was spilled on Calvary's hill for the redemption of sinners? What thinking man can keep from exclaiming, "My Lord and my God"?

"This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem" ([v. 16](#)). She knew Him. She loved Him. She makes Him known.

Chapter 6

From Skeptics To Believers (6:1-3)

Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?
whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with
thee [[Song 6:1](#)].

The daughters of Jerusalem are not so skeptical and cynical now. They are willing to go with the bride to help her find him. They want to see this one whom the bride has told them about. They conclude that he must be wonderful, and they want to see him for themselves.

The Bible tells us that whoever seeks will find. The Lord Jesus has said that if anyone would come to Him, He would in no wise cast him out.

My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to
feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's, and
my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies [[Song 6:2-3](#)].

She has located the bridegroom. What assurance, what satisfaction, what joy she has!

God is satisfied with Jesus. He has said, ". . . This is my beloved Son: hear him" ([Luke 9:35](#)). He is satisfied with the work which Christ accomplished for us on the cross. He says that if we will come to His Son, we will not perish but have everlasting life. What an invitation has gone out!

The King's Delight In The Bride (6:4-10)

Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem,
terrible as an army with banners.

Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.

Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them.

As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks.

There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.

My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her.

The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her [[Song 6:4-9](#)].

"Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah" -- the beautiful expressions throughout this section are the bridegroom's response to the long, intense, sorrowful, and patient search for his presence. A. Moody Stuart gives us this helpful background: "Tirzah was the royal city of one of the ancient kings of Canaan, and afterwards for a time of the kings of Israel. The word signifies pleasant, and the situation of the city, as well as the town itself, was probably remarkable for beauty. . . . 'Beautiful as Tirzah' -- how gracious the address to the slothful, sorrowing, smitten Bride! but 'whom he loveth he loveth unto the end,' though we change, He is 'the same yesterday, today, and for ever.' "

Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners? [[Song 6:10](#)].

This shows us how the Lord views the Rapture of the church. It is natural that we look at the Rapture from the viewpoint of our expectations. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" ([1Thess. 4:16](#)). But the Lord looks at it from His side. He will be calling His own. When the church comes into His presence, the angelic hosts will see one of the greatest sights that will be beheld in all of eternity. This will be the most thrilling event for us and for Him, too. Then they will say about the church, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" This same union of Christ and the church is pictured for us in the lives of Isaac and Rebekah. Isaac was walking in the field when he looked up and saw the caravan of camels coming. Rebekah was on one of the camels in that caravan. She got off the camel and came to meet her bridegroom. What a glorious picture of the time when you and I will go into the presence of the Lord Jesus.

The Response Of The Bride (6:11-13)

I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded.

Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib [[Song 6:11-12](#)].

I just can't resist intruding here with a little anecdote. A friend of mine who is a preacher went to speak to a group of unbelievers. They were a group that included college professors. Many of their theories were way out in left field. They really understood very little about the real issues of life. I asked my friend, "What do you think you accomplished by going to that group?" He answered, "I don't know that I accomplished very much, but I was certainly scriptural. I went down into the garden of nuts." There's no question about that!

Seriously, the bride had something very different in mind. It is interesting that this is the third garden we see in the Song of Solomon. A. Moody Stuart calls our attention to this: "The first garden is in spring, full of flowers and tender grapes with nothing mature; the second garden is in autumn, full of spices and ripe fruits with nothing imperfect; and this third garden is in the end of winter, but with the immediate prospect of a new spring. . . . It is still winter, but the winter is on the very point of bursting in a new spring, and the Bride descends into the garden of nuts to watch the first sproutings of the valley, the earliest blossoming of the vine, and the budding of the pomegranate."

Stuart compares this to the experience of the disciples of our Lord after His ascension as they wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father. In a sense they go into the garden to watch for a fresh outbreak of a new spring. The entire Old Testament is a new treasure to them since Jesus had ". . . expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" ([Luke 24:27](#)). While gathering and breaking open those old treasures of the past, the Spirit came in an unexpected manner and with unexpected power, which could not be described more exactly than in the words of the Song, "or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib."

My friend, the Word of God is a garden, a whole garden of unopened nuts. There are innumerable kernels in the Word of God waiting to be opened and enjoyed by the bride of Christ.

Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee.

What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies [[Song 6:13](#)].

The statement is made that the bride of Christ will be for the demonstration of God's grace throughout the ages: "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" ([Eph. 2:7](#)). All of the created universe is going to see us. None of us is worthy to be there, but we are going to be there because we are in Christ. It is because He loved us and gave Himself for us. We will be there for His glory and for our good. I can't think of anything better than that!

CHAPTERS 7 AND 8

Chapter 7

Portrait Of The Bride (7:1)

In the first nine verses of chapter 7 the bridegroom tells of his delight in his bride, using one beautiful figure after another. Harry A. Ironside makes this comment: "It is a wonderful thing to know that the Lord has far more delight in His people than we ourselves have ever had in Him. Some day we shall enjoy Him to the fullest; some day He will be everything to us; but as long as we are here, we never appreciate Him as much as He appreciates us. But as she listens to his expression of love, her heart is assured; she has the sense of restoration and fellowship."

Satisfaction Of The Bride (7:10)

She says all she needs to say about her beloved in one verse:

I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me [[Song 7:10](#)].

Twice before we have heard the bride say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his," but A. Moody Stuart draws our attention to the fact that this is an expression of far greater fullness. Although it implies the outgoing of desire from the heart of Christ, it expressly declares what is much more precious: that the believer knows the strength of Christ's desire toward him. Stuart puts it this way: " 'I know', saith the Lord, 'the thoughts that I think towards you, thoughts of good and not of evil'; the Lord who thinks them knows them, but he toward whom they are thought is often ignorant, or doubtful, or unbelieving regarding them; and most blessed are the souls that can respond, 'We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.' " We are objects of His desire -- what wondrous grace!

Chapter 8

The Very Brother (8:1-2)

O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised [[Song 8:1](#)].

"My brother, that sucked the breast of my mother" refers, of course, to a brother born of the same mother, implying the nearest possible relationship. It is this kind of a brother the Lord Jesus has become to us -- "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham" ([Heb. 2:16](#)), becoming flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone.

"I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised." A great many true believers are afraid or ashamed to openly confess that they love Christ. Oh, my friend, don't say you love Him if you don't, but if your life reveals that you do love Him, folk will not despise you for speaking of it.

I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate [[Song 8:2](#)].

"I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate." Stuart has well said, "It is our part to give Christ the best entertainment in our power, to spare nothing on him, to gather all of him and present all to him, that is choicest and best. But the full reference of these words is to the final 'marriage of the Lamb when his wife shall

have made herself ready,' and when Christ 'shall drink the fruit of the vine new with her in his Father's kingdom.' "

The Relying Weakness Of Love (8:5-7)

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?

I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee [[Song 8:5](#)].

"Leaning upon her beloved." The final stage of the true believer's life is characterized by weakness, by dependence, and by love. In youth we ". . . mount[ed] up with wings as eagles . . ." ([Isa. 40:31](#)) when His banner over us was love. In manhood we ran without being wearied -- even when (as Stuart says) we sought Him sorrowing through the streets of Jerusalem -- but in our declining years we are more apt to lean heavily upon Him in childlike trust. And when we finally recognize our utter dependence upon Christ and the truth of His statement that without Him we can do nothing, then He can use our service.

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame [[Song 8:6](#)].

"For love is strong as death." Death, with all its terrors, was the price of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ to lost men, but it did not deter Him -- He loved us and gave Himself for us, enduring the cross and despising the shame. Also death has been ten thousand times before the bride of the slain Lamb, and she ". . . loved not [her life] . . . unto the death" ([Rev. 12:11](#)); for ". . . neither death, nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" ([Rom. 8:38-39](#)).

"Jealousy is cruel as the grave" -- the all devouring grave knows no pity. Stuart reminds us that it was jealousy cruel as the grave that moved Elijah, who was very jealous for the Lord God of hosts, to slay the prophets of Baal at the brook Kishon and let not one escape. And "it was jealousy that stirred Paul to utter the righteous and holy, yet tremendous curse -- 'if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.' This jealousy, with its grave-like cruelty, our protesting and suffering forefathers knew better than we; and it produced a remarkable but noble mingling of ardent love to Jesus with tenderness of conscience and manly boldness, which made little account either of their lives or those of others, when placed in competition with the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ."

"The coals thereof are coals of fire." This reminds us of the love that burned in the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ when He said, ". . . The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" ([John 2:17](#)). Stuart adds: "Ascending to the right hand of the Father, he kindled within the hearts of his disciples the same divine fire that burned within himself; sending down the Holy Ghost to rest upon them as flames or tongues of fire: and the fire of love burned more mightily within them, than the visible flames that encircled their heads."

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned [[Song 8:7](#)].

"Many waters cannot quench love." Oh, how many times we have failed Him; yet our repeated failures have not quenched His love, nor has it been drowned by the floods of our sins.

"If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." The word contemned means to be loathed, despised. God is not asking for our money or our service; He is asking for our love. If we don't love Him, He despises the so-called Christian work we try to do and the money we put in the offering plate.

The Little Sister (8:8-10)

We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for? [[Song 8:8](#)].

The "little sister" is, many Bible teachers feel, symbolic of the church of the Gentiles. "What shall we do for our sister?" was the thorny question in the early church. [Acts 15](#) records the Council at Jerusalem which was convened to resolve the conflict between the Gentile converts and the Hebrew converts who had no intention of giving up the Mosaic system.

"In the day when she shall be spoken for." Well, who would speak for her? Nobody would want her. Gentiles were outcasts. But the day came when this sister was spoken for by the great Bridegroom of the church who called her to Himself. My friend, He did not choose us because we were attractive, but because He saw our lost condition and loved us.

Now that the "little sister" is accepted by Christ, what kind of reception will she get from the elder sister?

If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar [[Song 8:9](#)].

"If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver." Since the Gentiles were being accepted by God, they were being ". . . builded together [with the Hebrew Christians] for an habitation of God through the Spirit" ([Eph. 2:22](#)). The Jewish church faced the question: what should be built on it? Circumcision, ceremonies, different rites and ordinances -- yokes which neither the Hebrew fathers nor children were able to bear? James expressed the feeling of the elder sister: ". . . my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God" ([Acts 15:19](#)). The council agreed not to force Gentile believers into the Mosaic system, but to accept them as they were and do everything possible to build them up in the faith.

I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour [[Song 8:10](#)].

This is the rejoicing of the "little sister." When the gentile church received the good news of the council's decision, ". . . they rejoiced for the consolation" ([Acts 15:31](#)). Recognized now as a wall in God's temple, they greatly rejoiced in the privilege. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together

groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" ([Eph. 2:19-22](#)).

"My breasts like towers" -- the little sister, symbolic of the gentile church, soon nourished many sons and daughters with the sincere milk of the Word. The gentile church grew with amazing rapidity so that the little sister now has become both more beautiful and more honored than the elder.

There is a missionary message in this parable of the little sister. You and I need to recognize that the little sister included all nations in our day. In many parts of the world there are folk who have never responded to the call of the Bridegroom simply because they have not heard His voice. And ". . . how shall they hear without a preacher?" ([Rom. 10:14](#)).

The Transfer Of The Vineyard (8:11-14)

Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver [[Song 8:11](#)].

"Solomon had a vineyard." Solomon is symbolic of Christ. The bride, which is the united church of Jews and Gentiles, tells the story of the vineyard. First it was under the charge of its original keepers, the nation of Israel, and next it was committed to her own care. It is the same parable that Jesus told in [Matthew 21:33-46](#) about a certain householder who planted a vineyard, put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, then rented it out to vinegrowers while he went on a long journey. At harvest time he sent his servants to receive the produce, and they were beaten or killed. Finally he sent his own son. "But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" ([Matt. 21:38-40](#)). The answer is that he will come and destroy the husbandmen and will give the vineyard to others.

My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred [[Song 8:12](#)].

"Those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred" -- they are to be paid for their work. "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" ([1Cor. 9:14](#)).

"Thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand," promising, unlike her predecessor, that full revenue shall be the Lord's; yet she tends it with her whole heart as if it were her own -- "my vineyard, which is mine, is before me."

Historically the early church kept the vineyard just that way. But, unfortunately, the church in our day presents a different picture. Oh that you and I, as members of the bride of Christ, will be faithful in the portion of the vineyard God has allotted to our care!

Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices [[Song 8:14](#)].

The bride is saying to the Lord of the vineyard, "Return!" Over in the Book of Revelation the last thing she says is, ". . . Even so, come, Lord Jesus" ([Rev. 22:20](#)).

My friend, I don't believe you can honestly say that unless you know Him, unless you love Him, and unless you make Him known. Can you look up and say, "Come, Lord Jesus, I want you to come"? Paul said that God will give a crown to those who love His appearing. And to love His appearing means to love Him -- even as a bride eagerly anticipates and prepares for the coming of the bridegroom, her beloved.

Let us conclude this marvelous Song of Solomon with the lines of Herbert:

Come, Lord, my head doth burn, my heart is sick,
While thou dost ever, ever stay:
Thy long deferrings wound me to the quick,
My spirit gaspeth night and day.
O show thyself to me,
Or take me up to thee!
Yet if thou stayest still, why must I stay?
My God, what is this world to me?
This world of woe? hence all ye clouds, away!
Away! I must get up and see.
O show thyself to me,
Or take me up to thee!
We talk of harvest; there are no such things,
But when we leave our corn and hay.
There is no fruitful year, but that which brings
The last and loved, though dreadful, day.
O show thyself to me,
Or take me up to thee!

Bibliography

(Recommended for Further Study)

Darby, J. N. Synopsis of the Books of the Bible. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers.

Gaebelein, Arno C. The Annotated Bible. 1917. Reprint. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1971.

Glickman, S. Craig. A Song for Lovers. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1976. (A fine treatment of Song of Solomon.)

Gray, James M. Commentary on the Whole Bible. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906.

Hadley, E. C. The Song of Solomon. Sunbury, Pennsylvania: Believer's Bookshelf, n.d.

Ironside, H. A. Addresses on the Song of Solomon. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1933. (An excellent treatment.)

Jensen, Irving L. Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1974. (A self-study guide.)

Kelly, William. Lectures on the Song of Solomon. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.

Miller, Andrew. The Song of Solomon. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.

Unger, Merrill F. Unger's Bible Handbook. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966.

Unger, Merrill F. Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament. Vol. I. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981.